

## Lesson 65

# Israel Crosses the Jordan

God provided safe passage across the Jordan River for Joshua and the Israelites.

# Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

## Introduction

Have pictures of several national or local monuments ready to show. To start today, I have some pictures to show you. I want to see if you can name what they are and then tell me what or who they remind us of. Here's the first one. Show first picture.

Have pictures of several memorials or monuments your students will recognize.

What is this? Allow answers.

What person/event does it remind us of? Allow answers. Continue to show the pictures you brought and ask these two questions. Give hints if students need help guessing them.

Great job! What I showed you today are important memorials.

Why do we have memorials? What is their purpose? Allow answers.

A memorial is something, like a monument or holiday, intended to honor the memory of a person or event. Even though we didn't necessarily live at the same time as these people or events, we use these memorials to remember them.

Slide #3

Slide #4

In today's lesson, we'll see how God commanded Joshua to set up an important memorial to remind the Israelites of an amazing event.

Memorial: honors the memory of a person or event

Refer to Lesson 64 Theme Poster. We've seen how God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites after Moses' death. The generation that rebelled and refused to enter the promised land had all died, except for Joshua and Caleb. Now Joshua was preparing to lead the people into the land of Canaan. He sent two spies, who went into Jericho and stayed at Rahab's house.

Rahab had led a sinful life, but she had heard about the miracles God had done for the Israelites. She believed that their God was the one true God and that he would give the land to his people.

She chose to hide the spies on her roof and then help them escape the city. She asked the spies to spare her and her family. They said they would if she didn't tell her people what they were planning. She also had to tie a scarlet cord in her window and gather her family in her house.

The spies reported to Joshua that all the people of the land were terrified of them. Joshua was encouraged to move forward. There was only one problem—the flooded Jordan River was in between the Israelites' camp and the city of Jericho!

## God Stops the Jordan River

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

God was about to do a great miracle, but he wanted the people ready. He gave Joshua instructions to give the people.

First, God commanded that when the people set out, the priests were supposed to lead, carrying the ark of the covenant.

Who remembers where the ark of the covenant was kept when the Israelites camped? Most holy place in the tent of meeting/tabernacle. What did it look like? Wooden box overlaid with gold, covered with a mercy seat and two cherubim.

That's right. Two cherubim, or angels, were carved on either side of the mercy seat with their wings spread over it. Inside the ark of the covenant were the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments. The ark of the covenant represented God's presence among his people. By having the priests go first with the ark, God was showing the people to follow and trust him.

Second, God commanded that the people consecrate themselves. That meant the people were supposed to wash themselves and their clothing and separate themselves from anything unclean. It was often what the people did before special festivals or times when they came to worship God. By consecrating themselves, the people were preparing for an encounter with God.

Let's read what happened when the priests reached the Jordan River!

Joshua 3:14–17

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to the book of Joshua. It's the fifth book in the Old Testament. Who will read Joshua 3:14–17? Assign readers.

Wow! This account is amazing! What does verse 15 say about the Jordan River at harvest time? It overflows its banks.

This was the flood season when the waters of the river were high and strong. This wasn't a little trickle of water!

What did the priests carrying the ark of the covenant have to do before anything happened? Look in verse 15. Put their feet into the water.

The priests had to show great faith in God by stepping into the river. But once their feet entered the water, what did God do? God stopped up the waters in a heap far away, allowing the people to cross.

God blocked the river at a city about 15 miles north of where the Israelites were crossing. God's timing was perfect to block the river miles away so that it would dry up at the right spot for the Israelites to cross.

What city was close to where the Israelites crossed? It's the city they're planning to attack. Joshua 3:16. Jericho.

Where did the priests stand while all the people crossed over? Joshua 3:17. They stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the river.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Show the Lesson Theme Posters. The priests stood with the ark in the middle of the river while all the people passed over on dry ground. They were able to bring everyone and everything safely across and into the promised land. The ark was a reminder that it was God's hand holding back the waters.

Let's start the Class Notes. You have questions with multiple choice answers to circle. Who will read #1 and give the correct answer? Assign a reader. C. Flooded river. Have students complete #1.

And #2? Who will read that? Assign a reader. C. Priests. Have students complete #2.

Who will read and answer #3 about how God stopped the Jordan River? Assign a reader. A. He blocked it miles away. Have students complete #3.

And #4? What did the priests carry? Assign a reader. B. Ark of the covenant. Have students complete #4.

## Joshua Sets Up the Memorial Stones

God commanded Joshua to collect something from the riverbed. Joshua told one leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel to take a stone from the middle of the river to the other side. Then Joshua set up 12 stones in the river where the priests were standing to mark where the ark had been held. After all the people had passed over, God gave the command to Joshua, who told the priests to leave their place in the river.

When the priests' feet came up out of the riverbed on the other side from where they started, the waters of the Jordan were unblocked until it overflowed its banks like before the miracle. Everyone made it safely across!

Joshua 4:19-24

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Let's read what Joshua did with the 12 stones the men brought out from the riverbed. Who will read Joshua 4:19-24? Assign readers or you read the passage.

What did Joshua do with the stones? Joshua 4:20. He set them up at Gilgal.

Gilgal was the Israelites' first camp in the promised land! It was close to Jericho.

What did Joshua say the stones were supposed to do? Remind the people about how God dried up the Jordan River so they could pass over.

We call these 12 stones the memorial stones because they were set up to help the people remember God's miracle to bring them into the promised land. The people were supposed to teach their children what these stones meant.

The stones would remind the people about crossing the Jordan, but what other crossing would they remind the people of? Joshua 4:23. The Red Sea crossing.

That's right! God parted the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape the Egyptians, and then he stopped the Jordan River so the people could cross into the promised land. These miracles were quite similar even though they happened about 40 years apart. They marked the beginning and the end of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. The first crossing at the Red Sea was witnessed by the generation of Israelites who were slaves, but the second crossing at the Jordan was witnessed by the next generation of Israelites who had grown up in the wilderness. God wanted this generation to share his miracles with their children.

God also used these miracles to exalt the leaders he had chosen. At the Red Sea, God's miracle exalted Moses as the leader. At the Jordan River, God's miracle exalted Joshua in the eyes of the people so they would understand that Joshua was the new leader chosen by God. They needed to respect Joshua the same way they had respected Moses.

Look at the end of verse 24. What did God want the Israelites to do because they knew of these great miracles? Fear the Lord your God forever.

God's miracle also had a purpose beyond the Israelites. What would it show the peoples of the earth? Joshua 4:24. That the hand of the Lord is mighty.

Because the city of Jericho was built on a hill, it was likely that the people there saw the Jordan River dry up and the Israelites cross over.

How do you think that made them feel? Allow answers. Scared. Afraid.

The people in Jericho were wicked and worshipped false gods. But God showed them his power. They saw that God was with the Israelites, and he could do things that their false gods couldn't!

#### Slide #14

Let's return to the Class Notes. Who will read #5 and tell us where Joshua set up 12 stones? Assign a reader. D. The middle of the river and Gilgal.

Complete #5.

Who will read #6? Assign a reader. A. God dried up the Jordan so they could cross. Complete #6.

## Memorials Today

The 12 memorial stones that Joshua set up in Gilgal served as a reminder of God's miraculous work to bring the Israelites out of Egypt and into the promised land by parting the waters for them.

We have different memorials today that help us remember important events. These memorials may be monuments, like I showed you at the start of the lesson, or they can be holidays or events in church.

We're going to have a competition. I'll divide you into teams, and I want each team to list as many memorials as they can think of, along with what they help us remember. The memorials can be national ones, or they can be Christian memorials, like those for a religious person or holiday (i.e., Lord's supper, Christmas). When your time is up, each team will get to share their list, and we'll see who came up with the most memorials! Let's get started! Divide the class into teams and give each team paper and pencils/pens. Set a timer (i.e., 5 minutes) and give updates on how much time is left. Adjust time as necessary.

When time is up, let teams share their lists and explanations. Recognize the winning team. Conclude the activity by mentioning any memorials that were missed or by summarizing the meaning of any that the students didn't know (e.g., did students emphasize the spiritual meaning of holidays like Christmas and Easter?).

Great work, everyone! You came up with some important memorials for different events and people.

One important memorial we have in church is called communion or the Lord's supper. What are we remembering when we have the Lord's supper together? Allow discussion.

We have the Lord's supper to remember Jesus' death on the cross. The bread represents his body, broken for us, and the drink represents his blood, shed for our sins.

Luke 22:19–20

Slide #15

Slide #16

Listen to what Jesus said when he shared the last supper with his disciples. Read Luke 22:19–20.

Did you hear what Jesus said after he broke the bread and gave it to the disciples? He said, "Do this in remembrance of me." So, the Lord's supper is meant to remind us of what Jesus did for us on the cross. God knew that we, as people, forget things. We need reminders of what he has done, and we need

to learn what these things mean. Otherwise, we may not appreciate the wonderful things God has done to show his great love and mercy toward us.

Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #7 and answer it? Assign a reader. C. Honor the memory of a person or event. Complete #7. And #8? What is the answer there? Assign a reader. A. Animal. Complete #8.

## Application

### Slide #17

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. God gave his people an awesome demonstration of his power when he stopped the waters of the Jordan River so the Israelites could cross on dry ground.

What did Joshua set up where the priests were standing? 12 stones as a memorial.

Joshua set up stones in the river, but he also had leaders from the 12 tribes of Israel collect a stone and bring it to their camp on the other side. At their camp, named Gilgal, Joshua set up these 12 memorial stones as a reminder of God's miracle at the Jordan River.

Think about some things God has done for you. God doesn't part waters for us on the way to church or school, but he still works in our lives. He answers our prayers, helps us with problems, and provides for us.

Does anyone have something you'd like to share that God has done for you? It could be something in the past or something God did for your family. Allow discussion or share a personal example.

When we recall the good things God has done for us, it encourages us and others. We don't have memorials for these events in our lives, but we can still share them with others and give God the glory.

## Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

## Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

## Materials

Review Questions  
Medium-sized cardboard box  
Scissors or knife  
Four beanbags

## Masking tape

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

### Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

### Materials

Review Questions  
Three chairs set out for bases  
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

### Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?



## Materials

Review Questions

One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)

Pencils or white board markers

One die

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of

the object to be drawn before the game begins.

## Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

### Materials

Review Questions  
Masking tape  
Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

## Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

### Materials

Review Questions  
Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers  
Rolled up socks  
Masking tape  
Ten sheets of paper  
Markers

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the

first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

## Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

### Materials

Review Questions  
White board or chalkboard  
Markers/chalk  
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),  
tape/poster putty

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

## Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

### Materials

Review Questions  
Small paper strips  
Cup or basket

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

## Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

## Materials

Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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