

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 monuments and representations of holidays 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 monuments and holidays ready.
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.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Why do we have memorials? What do they help us do? Allow answers.

Memorial: monument or holiday that reminds us of a person or event
A memorial is something, like a monument (or statue) or a holiday, that honors the memory of a person or event that happened in the past. Even though we may not have lived at the same time as these people or events, we use these memorials to remind us of them.

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.

Refer to Lesson 64 Theme Poster. Last time, we saw how God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites after Moses' death. Now Joshua was getting ready to lead the people into the promised land of Canaan. He sent two spies, who went into Jericho and stayed at a woman's house.

What was the name of the woman? Rahab.

Rahab heard about the miracles God had done for the Israelites. She believed that their God was the one true God and that he would help the Israelites take the land as their own.

How did Rahab help the spies? She hid the spies on her roof and then helped them escape out her window. She lied to the king's men when they were searching for them.

Rahab asked the spies to save her and her family during the battle. They said they would if she kept their secret. She also had to tie a scarlet cord in her window and gather her family in her house with her.

The spies reported to Joshua that all the people of the land were terrified of them. Joshua was ready to move forward and attack the city of Jericho. There was only one problem—the Jordan River was in between the Israelites' camp and the city of Jericho! They would have to cross the river somehow even though it was flowing swiftly at flood stage!

God Stops the Jordan River

Who do you think would help Joshua with this big problem? God.

Right! God was about to do a great miracle, but he wanted the people ready. He gave Joshua instructions for the people. First, God commanded that when the people moved out to cross the river, 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? In the most holy place in the tabernacle. What did it look like? Wooden box overlaid with gold, covered with a mercy seat and two angels.

Two 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. By having the priests go first with the ark, God was reminding the people that he was with them and that they should follow him and trust him.

The second thing they needed to do was to consecrate themselves. That meant the people were supposed to wash themselves and their clothing and keep away from anything unclean. They usually did this just before special festivals or times when they came to worship God. God was preparing the people for something marvelous!

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

Joshua 3:14–17

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Turn to Joshua 3. Who will read verses 14–17? Assign readers.

Wow! This account is amazing!

What does the end of 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! It would be very hard to cross this river safely on their own.

What did the priests bearing, or 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 touched the water, what did God do? Reread verse 16. 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; he blocked the river at just the right place so it would dry up where the Israelites were going to cross by 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 Poster. 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 of the covenant reminded them that it was God holding the waters back for them.

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

Let's start the Class Notes. You will draw a line from each sentence to the pictures on the right. Who will read #1 and give the correct answer?

Assign a reader. River. Have students complete #1.

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

Who will read and answer #3 about what else the priests did? Assign a reader. Ark of the covenant. Have students complete #3.

What did the people do? Someone read #4. Assign a reader. Walked on dry ground. Have students complete #4.

Joshua Sets Up Memorial Stones

Slide #11

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. With the water gone, God commanded Joshua to collect something from the riverbed. One leader from each of the 12 tribes of Israel took a large stone from the middle of the river and carried it to the other side. Joshua then stacked up 12 stones in the river where the priests were standing to mark the place where they held the ark of the covenant.

After all the people crossed over, God gave the command for the priests to leave their place in the middle. When the priests' feet came up out of the riverbed on the other side, the river filled to overflowing like it had been before the miracle happened.

Joshua 4:20-22

Slide #12

Slide #13

But what about the 12 stones they carried across? Can you guess what they did with them? Allow guesses.

Let's read what Joshua did with those stones. Turn to the next chapter. Who will read Joshua 4:20–22? Assign readers or you read the passage. Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. What did Joshua do with the stones? He set them up at Gilgal. Stacked them.

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 "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 so they could hear about God's miracles.

Joshua 4:23–24

Slide #14

The stones would remind the people of crossing the Jordan, but there was more to it. Who will read Joshua 4:23–24? Assign readers. Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. What other crossing would these stones remind the people of? The Red Sea crossing.

That's right! God parted the waters of the Red Sea for the Israelites to escape from Egypt, and then he stopped the Jordan River so the people could cross into the promised land. These miracles were a lot alike even though they happened 40 years apart. They marked the beginning and the end of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. God wanted his people to tell their children about these miracles.

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 their God forever.

God's miracle wasn't just meant for the Israelites. What would it show the peoples of the earth? That the Lord is mighty.

The city of Jericho was built on a hill, so the people there probably 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. Remember how Rahab said the people in Jericho were very afraid? They saw that God was with the Israelites, and he could do things that their false gods couldn't do!

Slide #15

Let's go back to the Class Notes. Who will read #5 and tell us what Joshua did? Assign a reader. 12 stones. Complete #5.

Who will read #6? Assign a reader. Power. Complete #6.

Memorials Today

The 12 memorial stones that Joshua set up in Gilgal served as a reminder of the miracles God did 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.

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.

Luke 22:19–20

Slide #16

Slide #17

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? "Do this in remembrance of . . ." who? Me. Jesus.

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

God knows that people forget things. We need reminders of what he has done, and we need to learn what these things mean so we can understand God's great love and mercy toward us.

Let's finish our Class Notes, and then we'll play a review game. Who will read #7 and answer it? Assign a reader. Memorial. Complete #7.

Application

Slide #18

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. 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 each collect a stone and bring it to their camp on the other side. At their camp, 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? Allow discussion or share a personal example.

When we talk about the good things God has done for us, it encourages us and others. We don't usually set up memorials like stones or statues for things that happen in our lives, but we can still share them with others and give God the glory.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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.

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.

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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