

AUGUST 31, 2025

HERITAGE SUNDAY

## **DADDY, WHAT’S THE BIG PILE OF ROCKS FOR?**

### **FOCUS VERSES**

**Joshua 4:6–7**

<sup>6</sup> That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

<sup>7</sup> Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

### **LESSON TEXT**

**Joshua 4:1–9; Judges 2:10**

### **TRUTH ABOUT GOD**

God calls us to remember what He has done and share it with the next generation.

### **TRUTH FOR MY LIFE**

I will tell the next generation what God has done.

### **Thinking about Last Week:**

Have students refer to their Daily Devotional Guide to answer the following questions:

1. What most affected you as you read through the Lesson Text and the Biblical Insights?
2. How did it shape your prayers and thoughts throughout the week?
3. Do you feel you grew closer to the Lord this past week? Why or why not?

### **TEACHING OUTLINE**

**Icebreaker:** Who disciplined you to know Jesus?

**Lesson Connection:** Share the Lesson Connection. (I)

#### **I. CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER**

##### **A. Carry the Stones out of the Jordan**

» *When you had questions about your faith, whom did you ask?*

*Do others ask you?*

##### **B. Set Up the Stones in the Camp**

##### **C. I Will Remember What God Has Done and Share It with the Next Generation (V)**

» *What miracles has God worked in your life? Have you shared your stories with others?*

#### **II. LIVING ON THE PROMISED LAND SIDE OF THE RIVER**

##### **A. On the Edge of Jericho**

##### **B. What Happened to the Stones?**

» *Why do you think Israel left the memorial stones?*

#### **III. LIFE WITHOUT THE STONES**

##### **A. Joshua’s Death**

- B. The Next Generation
- C. I Will Teach My Family

» *How strong would we be if we only ate three meals each week? How strong spiritually would we be if we were only fed at church?*

### **Internalizing the Message**

» *What will you do today to help teach the next generation who God is and what He has done?*

### **Prayer Focus**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to help us remember all the wonderful things He has done
- For God to help us teach the next generation who He is and what He has done

### **LESSON CONNECTION**

*A supplemental image is available in the Resource Kit. (1)*

In northern Portugal sits a house unlike any other in the city, in the country, possibly in the world. Huge glacial rocks litter the landscape, and rather than attempt to pulverize them or move them out of the way, one engineer decided to build a house out of them. It is called the Casa do Penedo (House of the Rock). The builder built it in 1972 to be a rural retreat for a local family, but it has become a major tourist attraction in Portugal. The owners moved away to escape all the attention their unique stone house was attracting.

According to mybestplace.com, the Casa do Penedo is now a small museum, full of photographs of its construction and the beautiful scenery that surrounds it. Interestingly it is situated in the middle of a wind farm, but the house is without electricity, but not without its comforts and charm. The ground floor features a kitchen and small living space, aptly furnished with a stone sofa that weighs nearly eight hundred pounds. The bedroom sits at the top of the wooden staircase.

Unfortunately not all the attention has been positive. Due to its isolated location in the middle of the Portuguese countryside, vandals have assailed the house, necessitating expensive and often difficult repairs. The current owners have taken security measures, adding railings and bulletproof glass to secure their stone home. While some may have lamented the gigantic boulders on the hillsides, a brilliant Brazilian engineer saw an opportunity to build a house that would last for generations and cause children to ask their parents all about La Casa do Penedo.

### **BIBLE LESSON**

#### **I. CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER**

When people crossed over the mighty, muddy Jordan River, some of them begrudged the uneven stones they stumbled over, but God had engineered a plan for those stones. He had called Joshua to succeed Moses to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. But in order to get from here to there, they had to cross the Jordan River during the flooding season. As Joshua stepped his toes up to the water, he remembered how God had parted the Red Sea for Israel to cross, so perhaps He would do the same here. Joshua waited for instructions, and God spoke to Joshua: “This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan” (Joshua 3:7–8).

Joshua called the priests to the front of the line, commanded them to carry the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders, and called them to step first into the rushing river. As soon as their feet touched the Jordan River, God stopped the flow of water and Israel marched

across the riverbed as the priests stood still in the middle of the river. It was a miracle for Joshua's generation to tell the next generation.

### **A. Carry the Stones out of the Jordan**

God knows our forgetful frame, so before they all left the river in their rearview mirror, God called for twelve men from the twelve tribes of Israel (one man per tribe) to go back into the river and pull out a stone from the place where the priests stood. Each man hefted a large rock and carried it on his shoulder out of the Jordan River. Those stones would stand as a memorial from generation to generation, especially for the Israelites who were not at the Jordan River crossing.

When children saw the stones in the center of their city, they would tug on their parents' robes and ask, "What's the big pile of rocks for?" That was a prime opportunity for the parents to tell their children how God supernaturally brought them across the flooded Jordan River and into the Promised Land where they were living.

"Sweetheart, let me tell you about the day God brought us across the Jordan River during the spring. The Jordan floods every spring, you know. Our God stopped the water so we could cross. It was amazing. I wish you had seen it." It has always been God's plan for one generation to declare His works to the next generation. That is why the psalmist David wrote: "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

*When you had questions about your faith, whom did you ask? Do others ask you?*

### **B. Set Up the Stones in the Camp**

Once all the Israelites had safely passed to the Promised Land side of the river, the priests marched out of the riverbed and onto the shore as they carried the Ark of the Covenant. Once the final priest's foot touched dry land, God removed His hand that held the water back, allowing the water to flood the riverbed and riverbanks once again. Before night fell that day, the children of Israel carefully set up a monument made of twelve stones in the middle of the camp. Although everyone in the camp was there that day, the day would soon dawn when the Israelites were not at the miraculous Jordan River crossing. The stones would stand as a constant reminder to tell the next generation what wondrous works God had worked.

### **C. I Will Remember What God Has Done and Share It with the Next Generation**

"Stones" look different in our day than they did in Joshua's. Perhaps you do not have any rocks or boulders you care to heft from one house to the next, but each of us has stories of God's work in our lives. Perhaps God miraculously protected you from a crash. When you drive by that same area, share that story afresh with those in the car with you. If God healed you of a sickness or disease, when you hear of others battling the same condition, share your testimony with them to give them faith that God can do for them what He has done for you. Remembering past miracles should not imprison us in the past; it should free us to approach God with faith for the future.

**Teacher Option:** *A supplemental video is available in the Resource Kit. (V)*

*What miracles has God worked in your life? Have you shared your stories with others?*

## **II. LIVING ON THE PROMISED LAND SIDE OF THE RIVER**

The next time Israel took down their camp and moved down the road, they were careful to bring those twelve stones with them. They stopped in a village called Gilgal, about ten miles north of the Jordan River, and right at the border of fortified, walled Jericho. As they unpacked their gear, Joshua rounded up the twelve stones that had come from the riverbed and set them up in the camp. He gathered the children of Israel and reminded them why they had carried a pile of rocks from the river to their new campsite.

*When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children*

*know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever (Joshua 4:21–24).*

### **A. On the Edge of Jericho**

The Israelites kept the Passover celebration while they camped in Gilgal, and on the day following Passover, they enjoyed produce from the Promised Land. The next day the manna stopped and Israel started enjoying the fruit of their new homeland. God had provided one miracle after another. Surely Israel would never forget all He had done for them, but in case they did, the stones would remind them, remind them to tell their children, and remind their children to tell their children for generations to come.

But as we prepare to flip the page to Joshua 6, Israel was preparing to go to war with Jericho. The writer of the Book of Joshua did not mention the memorial stones, but perhaps they were with them in the camp where they returned each night after marching around Jericho's formidable walls. On the seventh day, once Israel had finished its sixth silent lap around the walls, the priests blew the trumpets, Israel shouted, and God toppled the seeming unfellable walls. The children of Israel climbed over the fallen walls and conquered Jericho.

### **B. What Happened to the Stones?**

Like children rushing to claim their own room in their new home, Israel rushed into the Promised Land, excited to finally be able to farm their own fields and build their own homes. But there is no more mention of the twelve memorial stones. Israel won some battles and lost a handful of others; they divided up the Promised Land for the tribes to inherit and inhabit; they set up cities of refuge for anyone who unintentionally killed anyone to flee to for safety until their case could be heard; but they appeared to leave the stones in Gilgal or maybe in Jericho. They were only one or two cities or campsites past the Jordan River when they forgot to keep carrying the stones.

*Why do you think Israel left the memorial stones?*

## **III. LIFE WITHOUT THE STONES**

### **A. Joshua's Death**

As the sun set on Joshua's day, no one rose up to succeed him as Israel's new leader. After the Book of Joshua, the Book of Judges tells of Joshua's final words and his final breath. He died at 110 years old. Israel gathered to bury their leader who had followed God to lead them across the Jordan River, through Jericho, and into their new land. But only one verse after Joshua's funeral, the writer of Judges records one of the most sobering passages in the Historical Books: "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10).

### **B. The Next Generation**

Once the generation who had crossed the Jordan River with Joshua died, another generation took their place, but they did not know their stories. The Book of Judges chronicles some of Israel's darkest days in her storied history, and it all points back to the chilling indictment in Judges 2:10. This verse is the tragic result of one generation failing to teach the next generation who God is and what He has done. T. F. Tenney often insightfully preached, "We are just one generation from extinction."

### **C. I Will Teach My Family**

God has called all parents (biologically and spiritually) to teach our children about the wonderful works He has done. Deuteronomy

6:4–9 lays the responsibility to disciple the next generation at the feet of parents, not just pastors, youth pastors, and children’s pastors. Since our children are only in a church service or class a few hours each week, parents should be teaching the children who God is, what He has done, and what His Word says He will do. Our lessons at church should help affirm the biblical lessons our children are learning at home.

Moms and dads, teach your children how to cook, how to hit a curveball, how to shoot a three, how to bait a hook, how to parallel park, how to mow the lawn, how to play the piano; but be sure to teach them: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD,” and Jesus is His name. Teach them the gospel: that Jesus Christ died for us, was buried, and rose from the grave. Teach them how to be right with God as found in Acts 2:38: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Teach them how to pray, how to fast, how to give. Teach them why we believe the Bible to be the Word of God. Teach them Bible stories to help build their faith to believe God will do in our day what He did in the Bible days. When they ask why people are baptized or why some people cry during church, let us not leave discipling our family only to the church leadership team. Declaring the Lord’s words and works to the next generation is our privilege, our responsibility, our holy calling.

*How strong would we be if we only ate three meals each week? How strong spiritually would we be if we were only fed at church?*

## **INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE**

Rufus asked his dad, “Why are we going out of town again? We do this every year.” His dad smiled and answered, “Well, we’re going because it’s time to celebrate Passover.” Rufus tilted his head. He didn’t say a word, but his expression said it all. His brother piped up, “What’s Passover?” Simon picked his boys up, one on each knee, smiled, and told them the story. “A long time ago, our great, great, great, great, great, well, you get the point. Our great, great grandfather was enslaved in Egypt. He and all his brothers worked every day trying to make Pharaoh happy, but they couldn’t. So they cried out to God, and God sent them a deliverer named Moses.

“After a while, God sent plagues. He turned water to blood, and He sent frogs.” Alex got excited, “Cool, I love frogs!” Simon shook his head, “Not this many. There were so many that they climbed into the ovens and the beds. Then came flies and lice and boils. It was bad. Each plague wore Pharaoh down a little more until they got to the last one—the plague of the firstborn. God was going to come through that night and kill the firstborn in every house if they didn’t follow God.”

Rufus looked at his brother. “Alex, that’d be you.” Their dad nodded slowly. “That’s right. The dad in each household had to apply the blood of an innocent lamb and spread it on the doorpost and lintel of their house. That night when God came through, He would see the blood and He would pass over their house, and the firstborn would be safe. That’s why we call it Passover.”

Simon wasn’t the king of Libya, but there were two little guys under his roof who counted on him and called him Dad. They needed him to teach them what he knew about God. This week join with your family or someone you are wanting to disciple, and share God’s Word with them. Start a family devotion where you dive deeper into the message you all heard on Sunday. Or buy a devotional and read through the devotions, praying and studying the Bible passages as you read. If you are living by yourself, call or visit someone and share God’s Word and your story with that person. Talk with your pastor about spiritually adopting a child or student in the church, especially one whose parents are not yet serving God, and help them grow in their faith.

If you feel unqualified to disciple someone else, start by sharing what God has done for you. And possibly ask someone in the church to teach you a Bible study so you will be more ready to teach someone else. Keep coming to every service and Bible study, ready to learn and allow God to transform your life through His Word. Let us learn from the story in Joshua and Judges: God has called us to

tell the next generation who He is and what He has done for us.

*What will you do today to help teach the next generation who God is and what He has done?*

### **Prayer Focus**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- For God to help us remember all the wonderful things He has done
- For God to help us teach the next generation who He is and what He has done