

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 57: CROSSING THE JORDAN
JOSHUA 3-4

Early the next morning, Joshua and the Israelites packed up and left Acacia. They went to the Jordan River and camped there that night. Two days later their leaders went through the camp, shouting, "When you see some of the priests carrying the sacred ark of the covenant, you'll know it is time to cross to the other side. You've never been there before, and you won't know the way, unless you follow the ark. But don't get too close! Stay about half a mile back." Joshua told the people, "Make yourselves acceptable to worship the LORD, because he is going to do some amazing things for us." Then Joshua turned to the priests and said, "Take the ark of the covenant and cross the Jordan River ahead of us." So the priests picked up the ark by its carrying poles and went on ahead. The LORD told Joshua, "Beginning today I will show the people that you are their leader, and they will know that I am helping you as I helped Moses. Now, tell the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant to go a little way into the river and stand there." Joshua spoke to the people: Come here and listen to what the LORD our God said he will do! The Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites control the land on the other side of the river. But the living God will be with you and will force them out of the land when you attack. And now, God is going to prove that he's powerful enough to force them out. Just watch the sacred ark that belongs to the LORD, the ruler of the whole earth. As soon as the priests carrying the ark of the covenant step into the Jordan, the water will stop flowing and pile up as if someone had built a dam across the river. The LORD has also said that each of the twelve tribes should choose one man to represent it. The Israelites packed up and left camp. The priests carrying the ark of the covenant walked in front, until they came to the Jordan River. The water in the river had risen over its banks, as it often does in springtime. But as soon as the feet of the priests touched the water, the river stopped flowing, and the water started piling up at the town of Adam near Zarethan. No water flowed toward the Dead Sea, and the priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed near Jericho while everyone else crossed over. After Israel had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua: Tell one man from each of the twelve tribes to pick up a large rock from where the priests are standing. Then have the men set up those rocks as a monument at the place

where you camp tonight. Joshua chose twelve men; he called them together, and told them: Go to the middle of the riverbed where the sacred ark of the covenant is, and pick up a large rock. Carry it on your shoulder to our camp. There are twelve of you, so there will be one rock for each tribe. Someday your children will ask, "Why are these rocks here?" Then you can tell them how the water stopped flowing when the ark was being carried across the river. These rocks will always remind our people of what happened here today. The men followed the instructions that the LORD had given Joshua. They picked up twelve rocks, one for each tribe, and carried them to the camp, where they put them down. Joshua had some other men set up a monument next to the place where the priests were standing. This monument was also made of twelve large rocks, and it is still there in the middle of the river. The army got ready for battle and crossed the Jordan. They marched quickly past the sacred ark of the covenant and into the desert near Jericho. Forty thousand soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh led the way, as Moses had ordered. The priests stayed right where they were until the army had followed the orders that the LORD had given Moses and Joshua. Then the army watched as the priests carried the ark the rest of the way across. "Joshua," the LORD said, "have the priests come up from the Jordan and bring the ark of the covenant with them." So Joshua went over to the priests and told them what the LORD had said. And as soon as the priests carried the ark past the highest place that the floodwaters of the Jordan had reached, the river flooded its banks again. That's how the LORD showed the Israelites that Joshua was their leader. For the rest of Joshua's life, they respected him as they had respected Moses. It was the tenth day of the first month of the year when Israel crossed the Jordan River. They set up camp at Gilgal, which was east of the land controlled by Jericho. The men who had carried the twelve rocks from the Jordan brought them to Joshua, and they made them into a monument. Then Joshua told the people: Years from now your children will ask you why these rocks are here. Tell them, "The LORD our God dried up the Jordan River so we could walk across. He did the same thing here for us that he did for our people at the Red Sea, because he wants everyone on earth to know how powerful he is. And he wants us to worship only him."

57. CROSSING THE JORDAN (JOSHUA 3-4)



"For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you until you had passed over, even as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea which He dried up from before us until we had gone over; so that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD is mighty, and so that you might fear the LORD your God forever."

Joshua 4:23-24

57. CROSSING THE JORDAN

(JOSHUA 3-4)

MEMORY VERSE:

*“For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you until you had passed over, even as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea which He dried up from before us until we had gone over; so that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD is mighty, and so that you might fear the LORD your God forever.” **Joshua 4:23-24***

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The leaders of the camp went around and shouted that when the people saw some of the priests carrying the ark of the covenant they would know it was time to cross over the river. TRUE or FALSE
2. Joshua told the people to make themselves acceptable to worship the LORD because He was going to leave them. TRUE or FALSE
3. The LORD told Joshua that He was going to show Israel that He was with Joshua just like He was with Moses. TRUE or FALSE
4. Joshua told the people to watch as the priests carried the ark across the Jordan river because as soon as their feet touched the water they were going to sink. TRUE or FALSE
5. As soon as the priests who were carrying the ark touched their feet into the water it stopped flowing as if a dam was blocking the water. TRUE or FALSE
6. The priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed while the rest of the people crossed over. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What did Joshua tell the twelve men he picked out to do? Were they supposed to each pick up a big rock and carry it over to the other side of the river?
2. What were the twelve men supposed to do with their rock? Did they take it to the camp?
3. Why did Joshua pick twelve men to carry a rock and make a monument instead of fifty men?
4. What were the people supposed to tell their children when they asked what the pile of rocks was for? Was it to remind the people of what the LORD did for them that day?
5. After they made a monument in the river where the priests were standing and the Israelites went to Gilgal, what did they do with the twelve rocks they brought into the camp? Make another monument?

Lesson 57

Act out the making of the monument

Supplies:

Large “rocks” made from Styrofoam (can use Styrofoam blocks)

Directions:

Choose one child to be Joshua.

Have the children each pick up a rock and carry it on their shoulders across the “camp” (the room) and set them down.

After they set the rocks down, have Joshua tell the other children to pick up their rocks and put them into a pile in the corner of the room.

Have Joshua tell the other children:

“This monument will make the people remember what the LORD did for them today.”

Lesson 57

Optional Craft

Make your own monument to remember the LORD

Supplies:

Cut cardboard squares about 5" x 5" for each child. Use cardboard from a sturdy box.

Younger children can use Play-dough or modeling clay. Have enough for each child to make twelve "Rocks" about 1" in diameter.

Older children can use bagged river rocks (can be found at the Dollar Tree, Target, etc.)

Elmer's glue (or any white squirt glue).

Directions:

Have the younger children make play-dough or clay "rocks" – help them count out twelve "rocks". Don't make them too big or you will run out of material!

Have the older children count out twelve river rocks.

Have them write their names on the cardboard pieces and put the date. Help the younger children write their names.

Take the cardboard and squirt some glue around the center (about 3" in diameter).

Have the children pile their "rocks" into a nice pile on top of the glue. You can press them together so that they will stick. If the play-dough doesn't stick, you can squirt a little glue on the bottom before pressing them into the pile.

For the older children: Glue the bottom of the river rocks before placing them into the pile.

Let the "monuments" sit on a shelf where the glue can dry without being disturbed!

You may have to let the children pick them up the following week after they are dried very well.

Tell the children that every time they look at their "monument" they can remember all the wonderful things the LORD has done!

PRAYER Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to remember God's faithfulness in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.