



The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

The Israelites needed to cross the Jordan River. Joshua told the priests to stand in the river. As their feet touched the water, it parted, and the people walked across on dry land.

You Will Need

- Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet
- preschool quarterly CD (track 12)
- CD player
- party hat
- Bible

Gathering Time

As the preschoolers arrive, gather them around Theo's Playhouse, and welcome them individually.

LEADER: Hi, everybody! Today we're learning that it's important to say "thank you" to God for what he gives us. Sometimes we forget our manners and need to be reminded to say our pleases and thank yous, don't we?

Let's call Theo and see what's going on today!

Ask children to join you in calling, **Theo! Thee-o! Come out and play!** Play Theo's Playhouse Week 12 (track 12) on the preschool quarterly CD.

THEO: (Appears with a party hat on his head, shouting back over his shoulder off stage.) *Well, that's just fine! Stay mad at me! Good grief! I gotta go! My real friends are waiting on me—oh! Sorry everybody—just saying goodbye to my friend, Jordan. Boy, does she have a temper sometimes!*

LEADER: Goodness, Theo! It sure sounded like you two were having quite an argument. What seems to be the problem?

THEO: *Well, you see...today I had my birthday party with some of my friends. We had a blast! Have any of you ever been to a birthday party?* (Allow children to respond.) *We played games, we had cake and ice cream, and then we opened presents! It was so great!*

LEADER: That sounds like fun. What happened with you and Jordan?

*THEO: Oh, see, Jordan got me this really great chew toy I've wanted for a long time!
It looks just like a race car!*

LEADER: Neat! So why is Jordan mad at you?

*THEO: You see...I got all excited about it and started playing with it right away...and
I sort of forgot to say thank you.*

LEADER: That's why Jordan was upset, right?

*THEO: Yeah, but it's no big deal! So what if I forgot to say thank you! She should
know I liked her gift—I played with it right away!*

**LEADER: I don't know, Theo. It's not very polite to forget your manners like
that. Maybe you hurt Jordan's feelings.**

*THEO: (Happily) Oh, come on! That's just silly. I liked her present, and she knew it!
She's just being difficult.*

LEADER: Theo, would you let me wear your party hat?

THEO: But it's my birthday. Is it your birthday today, too?

LEADER: No, but it's a pretty hat, and I'd like to wear it.

THEO: Do you promise not to bend it or sit on it or drop it in the ocean or anything?

LEADER: I promise.

THEO: Well...OK, then. Just for a minute, though.

(Leader removes the hat and puts it on.)

LEADER: It's a really neat hat. I think it brings out my eyes.

THEO: Sorta. Could I have it back now?

LEADER: Yep—it's a great hat. Do you like this hat on me, kids? (Allow children
to respond.) **I could get used to wearing this hat.**

*THEO: Maybe when it's your birthday you can get a hat like it. But could I have my
hat back now?*

LEADER: Here you go. (Places hat back on Theo.)

THEO: Well? Aren't you going to say something?

LEADER: About what?

THEO: About me letting you wear my birthday hat even if it wasn't your birthday?

LEADER: What should I say? I gave the hat back, didn't I?

*THEO: Boy, I can't believe you! The least you could say is "thank you"! I'd never...I'd
never...oh, I guess I did, didn't I?*

LEADER: Did what, Theo?

*THEO: I guess I did forget to say "thank you" to Jordan for my present. I'll bet I hurt
her feelings. I'll go say "thank you" right away.*

LEADER: First would you like to hear our Bible story? It's about remembering to say thank you. (Use a Bible with your notes, so children understand this story is found in God's Word.)

THEO: Tell me the story! Tell me the story! Then I'll thank Jordan!

LEADER: All right! Friends, will you help me tell Theo this week's Bible story? (Allow children to respond.) Great! I need one person to stand out front here and be Joshua. (Choose one child to come up front.) We remember that Joshua was leading God's special people, the Israelites, to the Promised Land, right? The rest of you are going to be the Israelites.

THEO: Oh, yeah! Joshua was brave and strong! God helped him lead the people!

LEADER: That's right, Theo. After God helped the Israelites cross the Red Sea with Moses, and after God gave them food and water in the desert, Joshua led them all the way to the Jordan River. But when they got there, the river was flooded—that means there was so much water, it was too high to get across! The Israelites didn't know what they were going to do!

THEO: I'm guessing God helped them, didn't he?

LEADER: You guessed it! Just like God parted the waters of the Red Sea so the Israelites could cross, God pushed back the Jordan River, so they could get safely to the other side. Everyone pretend to push the water away! (Lead children in pushing action.) The Israelites were very happy. Everybody shout, "Hooray!"

THEO: Well, did the Israelites remember to say thank you to God?

LEADER: They did! Joshua had the people get 12 big stones out of the river-bed and take them to their camp. This way, whenever the people saw the stones, they would remember to thank God for being so good to them.

THEO: So, what did God do?

LEADER: God was happy! It makes God very happy when people tell him thank you. And it makes him very sad when we forget.

THEO: Wow! And God gives us great gifts every day! Not just on birthdays. He even gave me all these wonderful friends! I guess sometimes I just forget to say "thank you."

LEADER: Theo, we all need to remember to thank God for his wonderful gifts each time we see what he does for us. When we get together with our friends, we should thank God for our friends! When we sit down to eat the food God has given us, we should remember to thank God for that food! God cares so much about us, and he deserves our thanks! Our Key Verse is adapted from 1 Peter 5:6-7 and says, "God's mighty hand cares for you." Let's say that together! (Lead kids in saying this adapted version of 1 Peter 5:6-7.)

THEO: I've got to go thank Jordan for my new toy! 'Bye, everybody! And thank you for teaching me a good lesson today!

Tip

If time allows, lead children in singing "Believe in God" (track 30) on the preschool CD.

LEADER: See you later, Theo! Now let's thank God for our friends. (Have the children fold their hands and close their eyes.)

Dear God, thank you for our friends! Help us always remember to thank you for what you do for us and the people we love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Before preschoolers leave, help them move into their small groups.

Ask Circle of Friends leaders to distribute this week's Bible Friends Dogtags and help children attach tags to their Doggie Collars. The Dogtags will help children remember today's Bible story as children travel through the Discovery Centers.

When you hear the director's signal, dismiss kids to their first Discovery Centers.



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