

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Lesson 12

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Bible Point:



Remember what God has done.

Weaving Faith Into Life:






Kids will thank God for the things he has done for them.

Key Verse:



"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done" (1 Chronicles 16:8).



Lesson Sequence	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Teacher Pack Supplies
1 Getting Started	"Thank You" Cheers (about 10 min.) Remember what people have done, and create cheers to thank them.	Bible	
2 Bible Story Exploration	Crossing the Jordan (about 15 min.) Experience the Bible story by carrying the "ark" and walking across the "Jordan."	Bible, 12 construction paper rocks plus 1 for each additional child, masking tape, CD player	CD: "Rushing Water" (track 19) 
	In Remembrance (about 15 min.) Make an "altar" as the Israelites did, and learn the Key Verse song.	Bible, paper rocks, CD player	CD: "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 18) 
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	What God Has Done for Me (about 15 min.) Create memory books to remember what God has done for them and to thank God.	My Bible Fun, scissors, crayons, markers, CD player	CD: "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 18) 

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Parts of this story seem like a rerun of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea 40 years earlier. Remember, however, that apart from Joshua and Caleb, all of the people crossing the Jordan River were no older than children when Israel crossed the Red Sea. This totally new experience must have reminded them of the stories their parents had told them about the miracle of crossing the Red Sea.

Notice that the Jordan River was not just a trickling stream—it was at “flood stage.” In the area of Jericho, it would have been 10 to 12 feet deep, and the current quite strong.

The Israelites built a stone memorial with the rocks taken from the center of the Jordan River. The memorial would remind people of the wonders God had done for the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land, and the 12 stones together would remind them of the 12 tribes joined together as one nation.

The last verse of today's passage, Joshua 4:24, tells us why God dried up the Jordan for the people to cross: “so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” God wanted his people to fear him—to give him the worship and service he deserved. Remembering what God had done would give them encouragement and faith when they faced the difficulties of conquering this new land.



Devotion for Teachers

The 1 Thing: As we grow in relationship with Christ, we become more Christ-like. We can testify that we have been renewed and delivered from our different lives of the past.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Reread Joshua 4:24. Note the public display of power that God left as a reminder of his love and power. In times of darkness, it is often helpful to rest in the truth of what we have experienced in the past. Encounters with our Savior remind us that he is with us. Sharing these experiences with others can give hope to the hopeless and bring glory to the work God has done in you. Identify five people to whom you will testify of God's power in your life this week. After you share, watch how God's power in you affects the people with whom you share.

For more about The 1 Thing, see page 4.

Understanding 1st & 2nd Graders for Teachers

First- and second-graders crave individual attention and like to be recognized for their achievements. Use this lesson to show kids that God deserves to be recognized and remembered for his achievements, too.

Easy Prep for Teachers

Get bonus teacher tips and ideas at www.faithweaver.com.



1 Getting Started

"Thank You" Cheers

As children arrive, ask them to share how they followed through on their Daily Challenges last week. Then have kids form four groups, and explain that they're going to play a cheering game. Tell kids that you'll name a person. Then groups will have two minutes to think of what that person is remembered for and create a cheer to thank that person. For example, if you say, "George Washington," a group could cheer, "Two! Four! Six! Eight! Washington we appreciate! Why? 'Cause he was the first president. Thanks, Washington!" Explain that after one or two minutes, each group will perform its cheer for the rest of the class.

When everyone understands the instructions, have groups create and perform cheers for George Washington, Mom or Dad, their Sunday school teacher, and God.

Afterward, have group members sit together to discuss the following questions. After each question, invite groups to share their insights with the rest of the class.

- Ask** • **How do you think the people you cheered about would feel if they could hear your cheers?** (They would feel good; they would feel appreciated.)
- **What do you think it's like for God to hear your cheers of thanks?** (God must feel happy when he hears us cheer; God must be glad that we're cheering for him.)
- **Why should we remember what God has done?** (Because it makes God happy; because God has done so much for us.)

Say **The Bible tells us a good reason we should remember what God has done.** Open your Bible to 1 Chronicles 16:8, and read aloud the Key Verse: **"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done"** (1 Chronicles 16:8).

- Ask** • **What are some things you remember God doing?** (God helped me feel better when I was sick; God created the world.)
- **How can you tell God "thank you" for doing those things?** (I can sing a song to God; I can write God a thank you note.)

Say **It's important to remember what God has done because we want to be sure to thank God. God does so many wonderful things for us.**

Tips from the Trenches

As children work on their cheers, circulate so you can help them create cheers and remember what the different figures have done.



Today we're going to learn about a wonderful thing God did for the Israelites. We'll also learn how the Israelites thanked God.

2 Bible Story Exploration

Crossing the Jordan



Let kids help you crumple brown, gray, or black construction paper to make paper "rocks." You'll need at least 12 rocks. If your class is larger than 12, you'll need one rock for each child in class.

Have children gather around you at one end of the room.

Say In the story we're learning about today, the Israelites are still traveling in the desert. When we travel, we have to take lots of things with us, don't we? Name some things you take with you when you go on a trip. Pause as kids call out their answers.

Well, the Israelites had to *carry* all their things with them as they traveled. They had some very important things to carry, too—like the ark of the covenant. The ark wasn't like Noah's ark. It was more like a trunk, and inside the ark the people carried the tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments.

Place a Bible on a chair, and explain that the Bible will represent the tablets and the chair will represent the ark.

Place two lines of masking tape about four feet apart in the middle of the room. This will form the Jordan River. Place the 12 (or more) paper rocks in the middle of the river.

Say One day as the Israelites were traveling, they came to a river called the Jordan River. This line of masking tape will be our Jordan River. The Jordan River was a very big river, and it was very full of water. In fact, the Bible tells us that the Jordan River was at flood stage when the Israelites went to cross it. The water would be way, way over your head. Ask the kids to think about what a very deep, very wide river would look like. Then have kids gather near the tape-line.

Play the "Rushing Water" segment of the CD.

Tell the children that they, the Israelites, need to get to the other side of the room but the big Jordan River is right in the middle of the room, stretching the whole way across. Ask the children how they think they should get to the other side of the room.

Say Thanks for those ideas. God had a very good way for the Israelites to cross the river. Here's what happened. God told Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, to have the priests carry the ark to the edge of the river.

Ask for two volunteers to carry the ark to the edge of the "river." Then have the volunteers pretend to dip their feet into the water. When they do, turn off the CD.

Say When the priests who were carrying the ark touched the water, the river stopped flowing. Then all of the Israelites were able to cross



Track 19

Extra Impact

Consider using the ark you made in Lesson 7. For more visual impact, bring in several sheets or blankets to use as the Jordan River. Lay the blankets on the floor so they stretch across the entire room.

the river on dry land! Have the volunteers walk to the middle of the river, and then have all the other children cross to the other side of the room.

Then God told Joshua to have one person from each family take a large rock out of the river. Have kids each pick up a rock from the river. Then have the volunteers carrying the chair join the rest of the kids. Play the “Rushing Water” segment of the CD again.



Track 19

When the priests came out of the river, the water started flowing again! The Jordan River was just as big and wide as it had been before.

Have the kids sit in a circle, and then turn off the CD player. Have kids each turn to a partner to answer the following questions.

- Ask**
- **How do you think the Israelites felt about God after he helped them cross the river?** (They probably loved God; they were probably thankful to God.)
 - **What good does it do for you and me to learn what God did for the Israelites?** (It shows us that God loves us and helps us; it shows us that God cares about us and is always with us.)

Say We should remember what God has done. When we learn what God has done for others, it reminds us that God can and does do wonderful things for us, too. The Israelites knew it was important to remember what God did for them. Let’s find out what they did with those rocks they carried out of the Jordan River.



Tips from the Trenches

You may want to loop a piece of packing tape on each child’s rock to help the rocks stick together.

In Remembrance

Give each child a paper rock. Then read aloud the Key Verse: **“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done” (1 Chronicles 16:8).** Have kids repeat the verse with you several times.



- Ask**
- **How could the Israelites thank God for helping them cross the river?** (They could remember what God did for them; they could pray and thank him.)
 - **How could the Israelites make known to everyone what God did for them that day?** (They could tell people about it.)

Say In Bible times, people piled rocks together to mark very special places. Then when other people saw the pile of rocks, they’d know something amazing happened there. Listen to what the Bible says. Read aloud Joshua 4:8-9.

Let’s pile our rocks together just as the Israelites did. But first, let’s remember what our Key Verse tells us.

Help kids recite the verse as they pile their rocks together in the middle of the circle. Then play “Give Thanks” (1 Chronicles 16:8) on the CD several times until kids are familiar with the words and



Track 18

Extra Impact

Bring in real rocks for kids to use during this activity. Just be sure to caution kids not to throw their rocks or handle them carelessly. If you use real rocks, you might want to let kids use permanent markers to write the Key Verse reference on them.



Find out how making your own song of thankfulness can teach you more about today's Key Verse! See

the activity on page 406 in your *Hands-On Bible!*



melody. Then have kids hold hands and walk around the pile of rocks as they sing along with the CD.

Then read aloud Joshua 4:21-24.

Ask • **How might a pile of rocks help us remember what God did?** (It will help us remember the Bible story about the Israelites; it will help us remember that God helps us.)

• **Why should we remember what God has done?** (Because God wants us to remember the things he does for us; because it helps us remember that God cares about us.)

Say ▶ **The Israelites wanted everyone who came after them to remember what God did for them that day. Our Bible Point tells us that we should also remember what God has done for us.**

Let kids take their rocks home with them at the end of class.

3 Weaving Faith Into Life

What God Has Done for Me

Say ▶ **We've learned what God did for the Israelites and how the Israelites remembered God. Now let's think about what God has done for us and how we can remember God. Instead of making an altar to help us remember what God has done for us, we'll make Memory Books.**

Have kids turn in their My Bible Fun books to the section titled "Memory Book." Set out scissors, crayons, and markers. Follow the directions on the student page to show kids how to cut out their Memory Books and fold them. Then give kids a minute to color the covers of their books.

Ask ▶ • **Has God given your family something you want to remember—a new baby, a job for your mom or dad, or a nice grandma, for example? Tell us about it.**

After kids have shared, encourage them to draw something on the first page of their books to help them remember what God has done for their family. Have "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) playing as the children create their books.



Track 18

Ask ▶ • **Has God done something to help you? Maybe God helped you not to be afraid during a storm, or maybe God helped you to believe in him.**

After kids have shared, encourage them to draw something on the second page of their books that will help them remember what God has done for them.

Ask ▶ • **Why should we remember what God has done?** (Because it helps us remember that God loves us; because God wants us to remember what he's done for us.)

• **How can we thank God for what he has done?** (We can tell others about him; we can remember the things he's done for us.)

Tips from the Trenches

Point out to kids that some take-home information is printed on the back of their books.

If some of your children have a difficult time thinking of things God has done for them, you can remind them that God made the world and that God made them. Encourage kids to draw their favorite elements of God's creation or pictures of themselves. You can also help kids think of their needs that are met—food, clothing, and shelter, for example.

Encourage kids to draw, on the last page of their books, different ways they can thank God for what he has done. For example, kids could draw a heart to show that they can love God, or kids could draw someone praying or singing.

Say **One of the most important things we should always remember that God did for us is that God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Jesus died on the cross so we could live forever with him and God in heaven!**

Let's each choose a Daily Challenge to remind us to remember what God has done. Have kids each choose one idea and then circle that choice on the My Bible Fun page.



- Create a thank you card for God, listing all the things God has done for you!
- At dinnertime, lead your family members in a prayer, and have everyone at the table say one thing God has done for them that they're thankful for.
- Find something outside, like a flower or a caterpillar, and thank God for making that thing.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same!

Then close in prayer. Tell the kids that you'll begin the prayer and that each person can take a turn thanking God for something he or she drew in his or her Memory Book.

Pray **Dear God, we want to remember what you've done for us so we never forget how much you love us. We love you, too, God, and we thank you for all you do.** Give each child a turn to thank God for what he has done. Close by saying: **In Jesus' name, amen.**

