

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Lesson 12

Joshua 3:1–4:24



Bible Point:



Remember what God has done.

Weaving Faith Into Life:





Children will find a creative way to remember what God has done.

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	Thanks So Much (about 10 min.) Clean up a messy room without being thanked.	Old newspapers, paper, Bibles, books, other classroom supplies	
2 Bible Story Exploration	Prayer and Praise (about 30 min.) Write prayers and create praise ideas from the Israelites' perspective.	Bibles, "The People's Prayer" and "The People's Praise" (Bible Buzz, Lesson 12), markers, pens	"Jordan River" poster 
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Our Altar of Remembrance (about 20 min.) Build an altar out of paper-bag stones and write things they're thankful for on the stones.	"My Thanks" (Bible Buzz, Lesson 12), CD player, 2 paper bags per student, newspapers, masking tape, markers, pens	CD: "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) (track 10), "God Is the Greatest of All" (track 23), "Give Thanks to the Lord" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 24), "Lyrics" poster 

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 deserves. 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 Christlike. 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 you share with.

For more about The 1 Thing, see page 4.

Understanding 5th & 6th Graders for Teachers

Fifth- and sixth-graders are beginning to focus more on others than on themselves. Expressing thanks is something that they have been taught from a young age, and they now are beginning to understand why. They are realizing, too, that their attitude of thankfulness affects the feelings of others. Many fifth- and sixth-graders have not considered that God wants them to be thankful to him as well. If you help them understand that God calls them to be thankful, kids are ready and willing to show him their thankfulness.

Easy Prep for Teachers

Thanks So Much—Scatter pieces of paper, Bibles, books, some wadded-up newspaper, and whatever supplies you have around the room to mess it up.

Web Help: Get bonus teacher tips and ideas at www.faithweaver.com.



1 Getting Started

Thanks So Much

As students arrive, have them tell a friend how they followed through on their commitments during the week to act on their faith in a specific way.

After students have finished sharing,

Say ▶ **This place is a mess! I'll need you all to clean it up.**

Assign different cleanup tasks to your kids. Make sure you don't show any appreciation for the work the kids are doing. Make sure to emphasize the fact that you're not thanking them throughout this activity. You may want to make it seem as if you're ordering them. After the room is clean, have kids gather around you. Then smile!

Say ▶ **I trashed this place to make a point.**

Ask ▶ **• How did it feel when I told you to clean up *and* didn't thank you while you cleaned?** (I was mad; it wasn't fair; I didn't mind, I was glad to help.)

Say ▶ **I can say it now: Thank you for cleaning up the mess.**

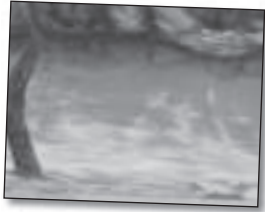
Ask ▶ **• Think of a time you were thanked for what you had done. How did you feel?** (It felt good to be thanked; I liked being appreciated for it.)

• How do you show your parents and friends that you are thankful for them? (I tell my parents I love them; I spend time with my friends.)

• How do you tell Jesus that you're thankful for him? (I spend time with him; I praise him.)

Say ▶ **This activity reminds us of the importance of being thankful. Today we're going to explore the importance of being thankful to God for the things he's done. We'll explore what it means to remember what God has done.**





2

Bible Story Exploration

Prayer and Praise

Say God promised the Israelites that they would enter a new land. The only thing standing between them and the new land was the Jordan River. Joshua was confident God would lead Israel to the new land. But what about the Israelites? Imagine you're an Israelite during this time. Let's explore what happened.

Have students form groups in multiples of three. Identify groups as 1, 2, or 3. Provide pens, and have groups find "The People's Prayer" in Bible Buzz (Lesson 12). Assign each group one of the Bible passages in Bible Buzz, and have them write a prayer responding to the passage from an Israelite's perspective. Allow groups about five minutes. Then have groups read their prayers, beginning with a Group 1. Allow other Group 1s to share their prayers with the class before continuing with Group 2s and Group 3s.

- Ask**
- **What was it like writing a prayer from the Israelites' perspective?** (It was nice to see how God worked in the Israelites' lives; it was hard to think about this situation from their perspective.)
 - **How did your prayers help you face the situation Israel experienced?** (It made me think about what they needed from God; it helped me realize how they might have felt getting ready to cross a big river.)
 - **How does prayer help us remember to thank God?** (When we talk to God, we can thank him for everything; prayer is a good time for us to thank God for everything.)

Say No doubt the Israelites had heard stories of how God parted the Red Sea when Israel escaped from Egypt. Now God had parted the Jordan River for them. Let's read about what happened next.

Have the class form new groups in multiples of three. Have groups find "The People's Praise" in Bible Buzz. Assign each group one of the Bible passages in Bible Buzz.

Say In your group, I want you to read your passage. Then come up with one reason, based on your passage and the Israelites' perspective, to praise God. Write down your reason, then write down two or three ways you can praise God for that thing. You might suggest singing praises of thanks, drawing a picture of the Israelites crossing the river, or writing prayers of thanks to God. You'll have about five minutes to find your reasons of praise and to write your praise ideas.

Allow groups about five minutes. As they work, display the "Jordan River" poster, and set markers near the poster.

Then have groups share their praise ideas, beginning with Group 1. Allow other Group 1s to share their praise ideas with the class before continuing with Group 2s and Group 3s. As groups share, have one person come up to the "Jordan River" poster and write their praise ideas on the poster.

- Ask** • **How did it feel to come up with your praise ideas?** (I enjoyed thinking of new ways to praise God; it was fun to come up with a way to praise God.)
- **How does praising God help us to thank him?** (We can sing songs of thanks to God; it helps us tell God in different ways how much we appreciate him.)

Direct kids' attention to the poster, and read some of the praise ideas.

- Say** • **Look at all these ways we can remember what God has done! God loves to hear our praises. Let's think about how we can remember the great things God has done in our lives.**



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!*

3 Weaving Faith Into Life

Our Altar of Remembrance

Have students find the "My Thanks" section in Bible Buzz (Lesson 12). Provide pens, and have students each find a place they can work alone.



- Say** • **Let's take some time to remember what God has done for each of us. Many times we don't even realize the many ways that God has helped us every single day. During the next few minutes, reflect quietly on what God has done specifically for you.**

Have students record their thanks in the "My Thanks" section of Bible Buzz.

As students work, play "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and "God Is the Greatest of All" from the CD in your Teacher Pack.



Tracks 10, 23



Give kids about five minutes. Once all the students have finished, provide paper bags and newspapers. Show kids how to make paper-bag stones by stuffing newspaper inside one bag and placing another bag over the first, closing off the open end. Then have kids use a marker to write on their paper stones one way they're thankful. You could encourage kids to list one item from the "My Thanks" section in Bible Buzz.

- Say** • **The Lord had Joshua build an altar with stones from each of the 12 tribes as a way for Israel to remember what God had done for them. I'd like us to build an altar with these "stones" to help us remember what God has done and is doing in our lives.**

Have students build the altar by stacking up the bags and taping them together with masking tape. After the altar is completed,

- Ask** • **What are other ways we can show God our thankfulness?** (Write a thank-you card to God; sing praises to him; thank him every time we think of a reason to.)
- **Why should we remember what God has done?** (God deserves it; we can praise God for the great things he's done; it helps us grow closer to him.)



Say

Let's remember what God has done this week. Our Daily Challenges will help us do that.

Read the following Daily Challenges aloud, then have kids choose one in Bible Buzz to commit to doing this week:

- Every time you see something God does—a sunset, a changed life—write it down and put it up in your room.
- Create a thank-you note to thank God for something you forgot to thank him for.
- Tell your family how God has done amazing things in your life.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge for yourself, and report back to the kids next week. As kids see you living out your faith, they'll be encouraged in their own!



Have students find the Key Verse, 1 Chronicles 16:8, in Bible Buzz (Lesson 12): "Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done."

Have a volunteer read the Key Verse.

Ask

• **What does this verse mean to you?** (We can tell others what God has done; when we tell others what God has done, they can get to know him.)

Say

This verse talks about thanking and praising God. Let's take a minute and praise God by singing a song based on this verse. Play "Give Thanks to the Lord" (1 Chronicles 16:8) from the CD in your Teacher Pack, and display the "Lyrics" poster.



Track 24

Close in prayer, allowing kids opportunities to say things they're thankful to God for.