

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Bible Point:



Remember what God has done.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Students will take the time to remember what God has done in their lives.

Key Verse:



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



Study Sequence	What Students Will Do	Materials
1 Faith Connection	Remembering (about 15 min.) Place themselves along a line indicating their memory of situations to understand the significance of remembering.	Masking tape
	Option: Media Connection (about 10 min.) Listen to a song, and talk about the importance of remembering what people have done for us.	Satellite CD by P.O.D.
2 Bible Story Exploration	CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE (about 20 min.) Adventure 1: I Don't Want to Get My Robe Wet Illustrate the Bible story through creative movement. Adventure 2: Stones of Remembrance Create a rock memorial.	Bible, Bible Trek Bible, permanent markers, palm-size rock for each student in this adventure (see Easy Prep for Teachers), Bible Trek
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Thanksgiving and Trust (about 15 min.) Record God's help in difficulty to see how remembering these things can help us later in our lives.	Pens or pencils, Bible Trek
	Give Thanks (about 10 min.) Read the Key Verse, and work in pairs to share with each other reasons we should remember what God has done.	Bibles

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 you share with.

For more about The 1 Thing, see page 4.

Understanding Middle Schoolers/ Junior Highers for Teachers

Middle school/junior high students often feel on top of the world. But, at least as often, they can feel inadequate and depressed. This study will help students remember times God brought them through difficult circumstances. As a result, they may experience fewer times of depression and cling to an optimistic outlook.

Easy Prep for Teachers

Remembering—Place a 20-foot piece of masking tape on the floor.

Media Connection (Option)—Have a CD player and the P.O.D. CD *Satellite* available. You will play the song “Thinking About Forever,” which is track 14 on the CD.

Choose Your Own Adventure:

- **Station 2**— Make sure this station has at least one Bible and several permanent markers. Students will go outside to collect palm-size rocks. If this isn’t possible due to weather or other factors, collect rocks (one for each student in this adventure), and bring them to class.

Web Help: Get bonus teacher tips and ideas at www.faithweaver.com. Also check out the Ministry and Media Web site at www.ministryandmedia.com for timely ideas on connecting today’s Bible study with what’s happening in our culture.



1 Faith Connection

Remembering

Have your students line up along a masking tape line (about 20 feet long). To add excitement, add some crazy twists. For example, you could have students move to their spots by hopping on one leg. Or once they reach the spot, perhaps they have to do three jumping jacks. Be creative and use the energy that’s inherently built into middle schoolers/junior highers.

Say ▶ **I’m going to read some statements about situations each of you may have been in at some time in your lives. We’re going to determine how much you remember from these situations. As I read a statement, if you can really remember it happening, move toward the right end of the line. However, if you can’t remember anything about it, stand to the left end of the line. Or you can stand anywhere along the line depending on how much you actually remember. Here we go.**

Read the following aloud, waiting in between situations for the students to arrange themselves on the line.

Say ▶ **Place yourself somewhere along the line based on how much you remember about what you ate yesterday—for every meal.**
Find a place on the line based on how much you remember of what you did last Friday night.

Find a place on the line based on what you remember about your 10th birthday.

Find a place indicating what you remember from the day you were born.

Find a place indicating what you remember about the greatest thing a friend has ever done for you.

Find a place indicating what you remember about your first day of kindergarten.

Ask

• **What did you notice about the positions you took on the line?**

Did you move around a lot? Explain. (I didn't remember what I ate yesterday, but I remember everything about my first day of school, so I moved around a lot; I have a horrible memory; I remember things really well and stayed at the good end.)

• **How did you feel during this activity as you tried to remember things about your life?** (It felt fine; it wasn't a big deal; I was confused trying to remember things; I felt good when I remembered it.)

• **What makes it difficult, or easy, to remember certain things in our lives?** (If it was a long time ago, it's hard to remember; if it was a big deal, it was easy to remember; if it meant a lot to me, I remembered it.)

• **Is it easy or difficult to remember things other people have done for us? Explain.** (If it was a really nice thing, I'd remember it; it's hard if it wasn't a big deal.)



Say

Today we're going to explore why we should remember what God has done for us.

Media Connection (Option)

The Media Connection is a brief optional idea that uses some type of electronic media—film, music, TV, or the Internet. It's not required, so don't feel you have to use it every week. Use this optional idea in place of another activity only if it's appropriate, appealing, and practical for your group. Students today are media savvy, so this feature uses elements of youth culture to teach biblical truth and show students how the Bible can be relevant to their daily lives.

Instead of the "Remembering" activity, play the song "Thinking About Forever" from the *Satellite* CD by P.O.D. You might want to play the song twice. It will be hard for some students at this age to catch it all the first time they hear it.

Be aware of any student who recently may have lost a loved one. Often a mistake people make is to not talk to someone about a loved one who has died. If you know a student who recently had a death in the family, ask if he or she would like to share some way that he or she is remembering the person who died.

(continued on page 105)

(continued from page 104)

- Ask** • **From everything he said, what words would you use to describe how the singer felt about his mother, who has died?**
(He loved his mom; he learned a lot from his mom; he missed his mom a lot.)
- **Why do you think it was important to him to sing about her?**
(To remember her; because he loved her so much; he missed her so much that he had to do something.)
- **Why is it good to remember what loved ones have done for us?**
(Because then we don't forget who they are; it makes us love them more; it makes us appreciate them more.)

Say Today we're going to explore why we should remember what God has done for us.



2 Bible Story Exploration

Choose Your Own Adventure

Point out the "Choose Your Own Adventure" stations you set up before class.

Say In our adventures today, we have two activities you can choose from. Adventure 1 uses creative movement, and Adventure 2 involves interacting with nature.

Direct students to their Bible Trek papers, and tell them they'll work together, following the directions in the student books.

Say After you finish your adventure, you'll present to the rest of the class some of what you experienced, so keep that in mind. You have 15 minutes to complete your adventures. Choose your adventure, and go to your station.

Adventure 1—I Don't Want to Get My Robe Wet

In this adventure, students will work as a team to express with creative movements the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.

Adventure 2—Stones of Remembrance

In this adventure, students will create rock memorials as they explore the Bible story.

While students are working, move between the stations, and offer assistance as needed. Let groups know when they have about five minutes left so they can wrap up their work.

When groups have finished their presentations, call everyone back together.

Say ▶ **Good job with your presentations. Now let's talk about what we learned.**

- Ask** ▶
- **How did God test the faith of the Israelites when they arrived at the Jordan River?** (It was flooded; the water was high.)
 - **How did crossing the Jordan River give the Israelites confidence? How might this benefit them later?** (They knew that God would help them get through anything; they'd stop doubting God so much; they would remember that God saved them before, so he'd save them again.)
 - **For what reasons was a memorial of rocks built?** (So they wouldn't forget; to remember; because they couldn't take a picture of it to remember it.)

Say ▶ **God performed an amazing miracle to help the Israelites cross a flooded river. The rock memorial would help them and others remember how powerful God was. A miracle like this would help the Israelites remember what God has done.**



3 Weaving Faith Into Life

Thanksgiving and Trust

Say ▶ **God instructed his people to create the stone memorial to remind them he was faithful and would meet their needs. We're going to take a few minutes to think of times God was faithful to us.**

Have students form pairs. Instruct pairs to spread out around the room and get comfortable. Direct each pair to the "Thanksgiving and Trust" section of the Bible Trek papers, and tell them to work together, following the directions in the student books. After a few minutes of quiet contemplation, have pairs volunteer to share their experiences.

- Ask** ▶
- **Why is it important to have an attitude of thanksgiving during difficult times?** (Because God uses them for good, even when you don't understand what's going on; because they make you stronger; I don't know because it's hard for me to be thankful during *really* difficult times.)
 - **How does remembering God's provision during difficult times help us with trusting God in the future?** (If you remember what God did for you during one difficult situation, then you'll be more peaceful the next time life is difficult; because when he helps you once, you know he'll help you again; it makes it easier when things are really bad because you can remember that it might not always be so bad because God made it all work out the last time.)

Say ▶ **Just as the Israelites made a stone memorial in remembrance of God's parting of the Jordan River, we should remember and thank God for the difficult times he helps us through. By remembering**



what God has done for us during those times and thanking God for his help, we'll be better equipped to fully trust him with our lives.

Take a moment right now to tell someone how you did with last week's challenge and pick out which Daily Challenge you're going to do that will help you remember.

- Remember what God has done by sharing with a friend how you learned about God and what you know about a relationship with Jesus.
- Remember what God has done by making a time capsule with three to five items that remind you of your relationship with Jesus. Hide it in your closet with a note on it that says to open it when you graduate from high school.
- Remember what God has done by journaling every night for five to 10 minutes about how you saw God work or felt him throughout the day.

Give Thanks

Have students form groups of four and open their Bibles to 1 Chronicles 16:8: **"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done."**



Say Together in your group, read 1 Chronicles 16:8. Summarize the verse together. Each of you can explain to the others in your group what you think it means.

Ask • Why is it important to make known to others what God has done for us? (Because your story can encourage someone else; it might make someone believe in Jesus; you can use your experience to give someone else advice.)

Now have foursomes join another foursome. If you have fewer than eight students, you can do this activity with the whole class. Regardless of how many students you have, form circles of no more than eight. Explain to the students that you'll conclude the study in a worshipful, respectful manner. The only person talking should be the student with the Bible. Whoever is holding the Bible starts by saying what the verse means to him or her.

Say In light of the Key Verse and everything we've learned today, give one example of how you remember what God has done in your own life—be as general or as specific as you'd like.



Each student may share something and then pass the Bible to someone else in the group. Continue this activity until all the students have held the Bible and shared.

Say God wants us to thank him for his help in difficult times. But he also wants us to call on him, to let him know difficulties we're experiencing. Let God know what trials you're facing, trust him to help you through them, and then remember to thank God for his help.

Close the activity by asking for a volunteer to pray.

