

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Lesson 12

Joshua 3:1–4:24



Bible Point:



Remember what God has done.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Adults will consciously remember what God has done for his people and in their own 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).

Lesson Sequence	What People Will Do	Classroom Supplies
1 Getting Started (about 10 min.)	Remember When? List memories from the recent and more-distant past.	Newsprint, markers, tape
2 Bible Exploration (about 30 min.)	Crossing the Jordan Study the Scripture and discuss the importance of remembering what God has done.	Bibles, a small stone for each person
3 Weaving Faith Into Life (about 20 min.)	Stones of Remembrance Listen to a song and discuss what God has done.	Mark Schultz CD, CD player, stones from previous activity, "Taking the Lesson Home" handouts (p. 97)
Option: FaithWeaver® Parent Portion		
4 Discovering Parenting Principles (about 15 min.)	Form groups to explore what parenting principles can grow out of today's story.	
5 Applying the Principles (about 10 min.)	Form groups based on ages of children and examine how they can further the learning from today's story with their families.	"Taking the Lesson Home" handouts (p. 97), pens

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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 Leaders

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 Adults for Leaders

Though people like to tease each other, saying, “The memory is the first thing to go!” memories are an important part of our makeup as humans. Experiences saved up over time in our memory become treasured events to reflect on—or horrors to relive. Adults know the power of both good memories (providing hope, inspiration, and general “good feelings”) and bad memories (revisiting pain, grief, and the inability to “move on”). But those that provide positive momentum in their lives—the good memories—usually are the ones that stand out. In this lesson, participants will explore what God would have us remember, receive inspiration from, and learn today.

Blessings to you for teaching today’s lesson. You’ll be helping adults realize the profound worth of remembering what God has done!

Easy Prep for Leaders

Weaving Faith Into Life

- Make a photocopy of “Taking the Lesson Home” (page 97) for each person.

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



1 Getting Started

Remember When?

Welcome everyone to class warmly.

Form groups of no more than four. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Have one person in each group be the group’s “recorder”—the person who will write on the newsprint. Have recorders draw four columns on the newsprint (using three vertical lines, equally spaced). Then have them write the following headings for the columns in this order, left to right: “Last Month,” “Last Year,” “Two to Five Years Ago,” and “Five to 10 Years Ago.”

Say We’re going to travel back in time for this activity to discover some of the most significant memories in your past. One at a time, have group members share an event that is memorable, either good or bad, in each of the four categories on your newsprint. Allow time for each person to share a bit about the event.

When all the group members have shared their memories, have a volunteer from each group share with the whole class one or two of the memories listed on the newsprint. Then tape the newsprint lists on a wall at the front of the room.

Ask

- **What is it like to remember significant events from our lives?** (Painful; nostalgic; it makes me miss my family; it brings good feelings.)
- **How do our memories shape us?** (If we dwell on painful times, our memories can make us narrow, bitter people; if we think about good events, we’re joyful people; memories affect our attitudes and they help us form opinions about the world.)

Say Memories can do amazing things. They can help us make better decisions in the present or lock us up in bad patterns. Remembering the past can be a powerful thing. God wants us to remember the past, too. He wants us to remember what he's done. We can learn from what God has done to make our "now" and "not yet" even better. Today we're going to explore how we can remember what God has done.



2 Bible Exploration

Crossing the Jordan

Give each class member a small stone. (You can collect these from the ground or purchase nicely polished stones from a nature shop.) Have several volunteers read aloud Joshua 3:1–4:24. Then form groups of no more than four. Have group members discuss the following questions. Each time someone offers an answer, have that person trade stones with the last person to speak.

Ask • **What did God do in this passage?** (Brought the Israelites to the place he'd promised years ago; parted the river for them to walk across; kept his promise; showed his faithfulness.)

Read aloud Joshua 3:5.

Ask • **How do we anticipate that God will do amazing things?** (Sometimes I think that we don't anticipate that God will do amazing things; we look forward to answered prayers; we look forward to God healing us and delivering us from trials and temptations.)

Say Look at verses 4:4-9 and 4:20-22.

Ask • **What kinds of treasures do you have, like the stones, to remind you of amazing things God has done? What's in your home that could prompt your children, or visitors, to ask about the meaning?** (Answers will vary.)

Read aloud Joshua 4:24 and 1 Chronicles 16:8.



Ask • **Why should we remember what God has done?** (It gives us hope for the future; it's a good reminder to stop and worship God for his work in our lives; it helps us teach our children about God; it shows non-Christians what God's done for us.)

After group members share insights with the whole class, have them place their stones in a circle on the floor at the front of the classroom. Ask a volunteer to offer a prayer of thanks to God for all the great things he's done in history.

3 Weaving Faith Into Life

Stones of Remembrance

Say God has done some amazing things in the past. Many of these are recorded in the Bible. But God has done great things in our past, too. Let's remember those now.

Make sure each class member still has his or her stone. Ask the class to hold the stones in the palms of their hands while they listen to the song “Remember Me” from the CD titled *Mark Schultz*. While they listen to the song, have them remember specific things that God has done in their lives and thank God for being personally involved in their lives.

Note: If you can’t find this CD, have group members reflect silently for about a minute, then skip to the questions.

After the song,

Ask • **What has God done for you?** (Saved me; rescued me from myself; helped me find my spouse; helped me with my children.)

• **How does remembering what God has done make you feel about him?** (Deeply grateful; humbled; loved; joyful.)

Pass out the “Taking the Lesson Home” pages (page 97). Have everyone read the Daily Challenges, and choose at least one to do this week. Have everyone find a partner and tell their partner what challenge they’ll do next week.

Take a moment for partners to review what happened as a result of doing their Daily Challenge last week.

Finally, close the class in prayer, asking God to help each of you follow through on your commitments and weave your faith into your day-to-day life.

Extra Impact

This week send a personal note to each person in your class, including a reference to a memory you have of how God has worked in his or her life.

Option: FaithWeaver® Parent Portion

Note: If your class is primarily made up of parents who have children at home, you may want to use the following activities to allow parents to focus on furthering the growth of their children’s faith through today’s Bible passage.

4 Discovering Parenting Principles

Have class members discuss the following questions in small groups.

Ask • **What key parenting principles can we draw from today’s story?**

• **How can we better exhibit that principle in our parenting?**

• **What are ways parents can help children recognize the importance of remembering what God has done in their lives?**

5 Applying the Principles

Have class members form groups based on their children’s ages. For example, you might have a group for parents of preschool children, one for parents of elementary children, and one for parents of teenagers. Distribute the “Taking the Lesson Home” handouts (p. 97). Have groups discuss the following questions to help them determine how they can apply the principles in their homes during the coming week. Have people write any additional ideas on their handouts.

Ask

- **What do my children stand to gain in the development of their faith through the message of remembering what God has done?**
- **How might I use the activities suggested on the handout to help further the growth of my family's faith?**
- **How can I help my family remember what God has done for us?**
- **How can I encourage my family to give thanks for what God has done for us?**

Encourage each class member to commit to putting into practice at least one of the ideas that was suggested and discussed.



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

Use the following activities to further the application of this week’s lesson in the lives of your family members.

Discussion Starters

Preschoolers

- What are some things God has given you that we can thank God for?
- How can we say thank you to God?

Elementary Students

- What is something God has done for you?
- How do you say thank you to God?

Youth

- When have you felt really thankful for something?
- Why should we remember what God has done?

Talk Topics

- Discuss what God has done for your family lately. Practice telling the story so you can be prepared to tell others what God has done for you.
- Discuss what God has done for another family. Does that family seem thankful? How did they give God the credit for helping them?
- Review familiar Bible stories that illustrate how God has shaped history, such as the story of Noah, the delivery of the Israelites out of slavery, and the story of Paul’s conversion. Have family members talk about how the “memory” of those events makes them feel and impacts the way they live.

Daily Challenges™

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week:

- Put an item in your wallet, such as a petal from a flower or a word written on a sticky note, to remind you of what God has done for you.
- Put a bowl on your dining room table. Encourage everyone in your family to put items in the bowl to remind your family of what God has done. Each night at dinner, talk about the items and let your prayer before the meal focus on thanking God.
- Tell a child you know about what God has done in our world and in your life.
- Write a praise song or a poem to thank God for what he’s done for you. Sing it in your own personal worship time, and consider singing it for your family or roommates.
- For more family activities related to this lesson, check out www.faithweaver.com and click on HomeConnect!

How is your relationship with God making a difference in how you treat others this week?

Through the Week

During devotional times use the following passages to help you remember what God has done.

- Monday—1 Chronicles 16:8-12
- Tuesday—Nehemiah 4:1-14
- Wednesday—Nehemiah 9:1-37
- Thursday—Job 36:22-26
- Friday—Psalm 63:1-8
- Saturday—Psalm 77:1-12

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