

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Make a Way Through Anything

SCRIPTURE: [Joshua 3–4](#)

WORD OF WONDER: [From 1 Chronicles 16:15](#)

When I was 20, a debilitating autoimmune disease forced me to consider quitting college. Plagued with aching joints and constant fatigue, my physical condition made it seem unlikely I would graduate at the end of the year. But day by day, God provided all I needed to earn my degree. Understanding professors, helpful friends, and good doctors allowed me to continue.

God prepared the way for Israel to go into the promised land. But even with other signs of God's provision, the 120-mile-long Jordan River still stood as an obvious barrier between the people and the fulfillment of God's promise. God instructed Joshua to have priests, carrying the ark of the covenant, lead the way.

Read [Joshua 3:14–17](#). When the feet of the priests touched the water, the river stopped flowing, just as God had promised. The priests stood in the middle of the river holding the ark while the people crossed on dry ground. A new generation of Israelites watched God hold back the water, just as He had done for their ancestors at the Red Sea.

What obstacles or setbacks have you encountered in your life? How have you seen God make a way through a difficult situation? What is one way you can trust Him more today?

In this life, we will face big obstacles. This story reminds us that God can make a way through anything. We can thank God that all things are possible through Him!

—**Suzanne Gosselin**

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Joshua is a central figure in this story. Like Moses, who parted the Red Sea, Joshua is Israel's leader as they experience another water-crossing miracle—crossing the Jordan River on dry ground. After the Israelites crossed, they began to respect Joshua like they had Moses ([Joshua 4:14](#)).

WHAT?

[Joshua 3–4](#) is about God showing the Israelites that He would make the way for them. Just like God parted the Red Sea when their ancestors escaped Egypt, God held back the Jordan River so that the Israelites could get across.

WHERE?

The story takes place at the Jordan River. This river is famous in the Bible as the body of water that Elijah parted with his cloak centuries later ([2 Kings 2:8](#)). It is also where John baptized Jesus ([Mark 1:9–11](#)).

WHEN?

The story takes place immediately after the spies returned from Jericho. They gave Joshua a good report, so Joshua gathered 40,000 Israelite warriors to attack the city. Then the entire nation of Israel miraculously crossed the Jordan on their way to Jericho.

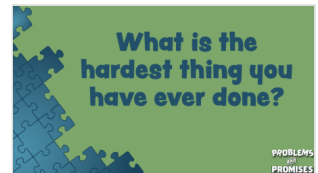
CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River to enter the land God promised them. Over 1,000 years later, Jesus (whose name is the Greek form of Joshua) would be baptized in this same river and will ultimately lead us into God's promised kingdom of heaven.

Welcome & Curiosity Questions

WHAT YOU NEED: [Jordan Welcome Question Slide](#)

Display the [Jordan Welcome Question Slide](#)



As kids arrive ...

Welcome the whole group and invite a couple of kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question: **What is the hardest thing you have ever done?** As time allows, invite all the kids to share their answers with a neighbor. **Today we'll hear about a time when the Israelites faced something so hard it seemed impossible to overcome, but God made a way for them to get through it! But first, it's time to be curious!**

Ask the following "I'm curious" questions. Say, "I'm curious ..." before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one.

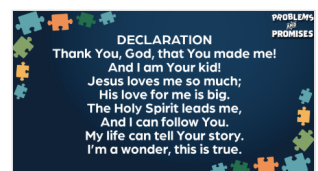
I'm curious ...

- **How do you feel after doing something really hard?**
- **Has anyone ever helped you overcome a hard challenge? Tell us about it.**

Declaring God's Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Declaration [Slide](#)

Encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.



Thank You, God, that You made me! (*Kids repeat words and motions.*)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (*Kids repeat words and motions.*)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (*Kids repeat words and motions.*)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your

chest.

His love for me is big. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for loving us. We believe that nothing is impossible through Your Holy Spirit! You see our present and future situations, and You promise to be with us always. We invite You to lead us, teach us, and help us to know you better today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible, [Bible Story Picture](#)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week with the kids before the Bible story, to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? *Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*

God's big story, waiting for me! *Point to yourself.*

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the Bible. We're going to read from the Old Testament.

Read [Joshua 3:5, 7–8, 11–17](#) and [4: 1–3, 5–7](#) from the Bible. You can also show the [Bible Story Picture](#) to give kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

WHAT YOU NEED: [Jordan Wonder Truth Slide](#)

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD CAN MAKE A WAY THROUGH ANYTHING**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River to enter the land God promised them. Over one thousand years later, Jesus was baptized in the same river. One day, Jesus will lead us

into God's promised kingdom of heaven. God made a way for the Israelites to cross the Jordan River, and through Jesus, He makes the way for us to live with Him forever!

Word of Wonder

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible, Word of Wonder [Slide](#)

WORD OF WONDER

God keeps His promises forever.

—from 1 Chronicles 16:15

Display the Word of Wonder [Slide](#). **Our Word of Wonder for the Problems and Promises series is from 1 Chronicles 16:15: “God keeps His promises forever.”** Encourage the kids to say the verse with you. **God promised long ago to bring His people, the Israelites, into their special home, and in today's story, He kept His promise and made the way for them to get there through a river. God keeps His promises! That's what the 12 stones helped them remember. They stacked the stones into a pile.**



Joshua said to God's people, “These stones help us remember how God made a way for us through the river!” That day, everyone knew that God was with them and that nothing was too hard for Him.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD**—Point up.
- **KEEPS**—Spread your right hand out before you from left to right.
- **HIS PROMISES**—Place an index finger on your lips. Move your hand downward and open your palm.
- **FOREVER**—Draw large circles in the air with your index finger.
- **FROM 1 CHRONICLES 16:15**—Open your hands in front of you, like opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What promise did God make to the Israelites in the part of God's big story we read today?** (to bring them to the special land—the promised land)
- **What promises has God made to us?**

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: grey/brown paper cut into rock shapes

Ahead of time, cut out seven stone shapes (they don't have to be perfect!) and number them 1–7.

In today's story, we learned about how God led His people across the Jordan River. God told Joshua to choose 12 men to pick up one big stone each from the riverbed—one stone for each big family of Israel. They carried the stones to their camp and made a tall pile. God made a way for His people to pass through the river and showed that He always keeps His promises. Let's use these stones to help us discuss questions about the story.

Pass around one stone. Say freeze periodically, and whoever has the stone when the music stops will read the number on it. Read the question from the corresponding number on the list below. Collect that stone and start again with a new one, continue until all the stones have been answered.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Who did God choose to lead the Israelites into the promised land?** (*Joshua*)
- 2. Which river did the Israelites have to cross?** (*the Jordan River*)
- 3. What special item did the priests carry into the river?** (*the ark of the covenant*)
- 4. What happened as soon as the priests stepped into the river?** (*The river stopped flowing.*)
- 5. What did the Israelites put into a pile to remember God's help at the river?** (*stones*)
- 6. Can God make a way through something that seems impossible? Think of one other thing (from the Bible or your life) that God has done.**
- 7. What is one way God has helped you (or your) family through something hard?**

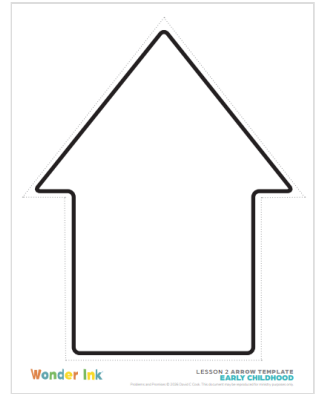
Today we learned how God was always with His people, making a way through what seemed like an impossible situation. Some things feel very hard or impossible for us to handle on our own, but we know God is always with us and helps us get through hard things.

Craft: Follow God Arrows

WHAT YOU NEED: coloring utensils, kid-safe scissors, glue, construction paper (1 sheet per kid), [Arrow Template](#) (1 per kid)

Set out coloring utensils and kid-safe scissors. **Each of you has a Follow God arrow. You can draw a picture of yourself following God inside the arrow. When you finish, you can cut out the arrow and take it home. You can hang it up at home to remind you to always trust and follow God.**

Invite the kids to draw themselves inside the arrows. Encourage them to be creative as they draw. Some kids may just scribble inside the arrows, and that's OK! The arrow will still remind them to follow God. Help kids cut out their arrows. They can glue or tape the arrows to a sheet of construction paper, or just take the arrows home.



When we don't know where to go or what to do, an arrow can point us to the right way. This arrow reminds us to look to God and trust in Him.

The Israelites followed God to the land He promised. They trusted that God would take care of them. We can follow God and trust Him just like the Israelites did. He will never leave us and will always take care of us. These arrows will remind us that God can make a way through anything.



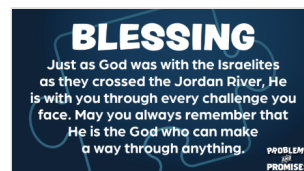
Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Blessing Your Kids

WHAT YOU NEED: [Jordan Blessing Slide](#)

Speak this blessing over your kids.



Blessing: Just as God was with the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River, He is with you through every challenge you face. May you always remember that He is the God who can make a way through anything.

BONUS **GAME 2: STONES ACROSS THE RIVER** (it will be prepped, do if you need to fill time!)

SUPPLIES: painter's tape, paper wads (12 per team), baskets (2 per team)

Ahead of time, use painter's tape to mark parallel lines on the floor as far apart as you can get them (to make a big "river" in the middle). Set out a basket or bowl on each side of the river for every team of 4–6 kids.

In this game, kids will compete in a relay race to get 12 stones across a pretend river. Create equal teams. Put 12 paper wads (pretend stones) in each team's basket or bowl on the side of the river that the kids will start on. Have the teams line up behind their basket or bowl.

You're going to work together as a team to get all 12 stones to the other side of the river. You can only take one stone at a time across the river. When you get to the other side, drop it into your team's basket and run back to tag the next person in line, who will do the same thing. Keep going until all 12 stones are on the other side of the river. It sounds easy ... but I'll be calling out instructions with different ways to move through the river to get across it, so listen carefully and do what I say! When the teams are ready, say, "Go," and let them start moving the stones across the river. As they play, call out the following instructions for ways to move across the river, changing it up as frequently as you want:

- Jumping
- Skipping
- Slow motion
- Marching
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Crawling
- Linking elbows with a partner
- Walking backwards
- Dancing
- Spinning
- Tiptoeing

Was it more challenging to get the stones across the river when you had to move in different ways? No matter what challenges we come up against, we can trust God to be with us. We're learning today about how God was with His people when they crossed a river and how He made a way for them. They used stones from the river to help them always remember what God did for them and how God made a way through anything.

**Works well with the
Crossing the Jordan
River lesson!**