

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

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CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Joshua is a central 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.

Object Lesson: Exploring Stones

WHAT YOU NEED: various shapes and sizes of rocks and stones, tray or bin

WHAT YOU DO: Before kids arrive, gather as many different shapes and sizes of rocks and stones as you can find and put them on a tray or in a bin. Make sure the rocks are clean and big enough to not be a choking hazard. Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

WHAT YOU SAY: Hi, I'm so glad you're here! Today we're going to learn a story that has a pile of stones in it. The stones were a special reminder to God's people, the Israelites. Would you like to look at, feel, and hold these rocks and stones?

Invite kids to come up to the tray to hold and play with the rocks and stones. Encourage them to stack the stones in one big pile, encouraging all the kids to participate in putting a stone in the pile.

In God's big story we're going to hear today, the Israelites made a pile of stones just like this to remind them of something. We're going to find out more soon.

Activity: Part the Water

WHAT YOU NEED: blue paper/plastic table cloth/tarp, tissue paper

WHAT YOU DO: Ahead of time, crumple up sheets of blue paper and put them in a line to make a pretend river. Use the plastic table cloth/tarp as needed. (You can show a video of babbling brook/running river on youtube or your phone if you want!)

WHAT YOU SAY: In our story today, we'll hear about God parting the water in a river so the Israelites could walk through it. We'll learn how God made a way for His people even when it seemed impossible. Let's take turns pushing the water out of the way and going through the pretend river, like the Israelites did.

Demonstrate pushing the paper out of the way and running through the river. Then let kids take turns doing it, making sure to have a leader put the paper back after each kid has a turn. (You may want to leave the "river" set up for the God's Big Story section.)

We'll learn all about what God did in today's story. Our Wonder Truth today is: GOD CAN MAKE A WAY THROUGH ANYTHING.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—Point up.

CAN MAKE—Spread your arms out in front of you.

A WAY—Move your hands out in front and down, like you're pointing to a path in front of you.

THROUGH ANYTHING—Spread your arms out in front of you, pointing toward everything around you.

God's Big Bible Story

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible, blue disposable tablecloth/tarp, stones, [Bible Story Picture](#)

WHAT YOU DO: Ahead of time, set out a blue blanket or disposable tablecloth cover on the ground to be a pretend river. Set some stones on the pretend water.

WHAT YOU SAY: Our God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about a person named Joshua. Can you say, "Joshua"? Pause to allow the kids to respond. We'll learn how he trusted God and led the Israelites, God's people. Good! Let's find out from the Bible how God helped Joshua and the Israelites.

Read the story from the Bible, or use the script provided below. You can also print the [Bible Story Picture](#) to give the kids a visual depiction of the story. Gather all the kids to sit on one side of the pretend river.

The Israelites were God's special people. He told them He had a special land for them to live in. They had a lot of hard things they had to go through to get to it. They had a very long journey in the wilderness, but God was always with them. God chose Joshua to be their leader. After lots of years of wandering, the Israelites were almost to the special land. They were so close! Put your hand over your eyes and squint as if you're looking at something in the distance and encourage kids to mimic you.

Can you see it, if you look really hard? Point across the pretend river. **They were probably very excited that they were getting closer to the special land. But on the way, they came to a big, flowing river. How would they get across the big river? It didn't have bridges. It was too big to jump across, too deep and wide for all the people to swim across, and it would take too long to go around. It seemed impossible!** Put your hands on your hips, looking defeated and sad. Encourage kids to mimic you.

But God had a plan to make a way. God made the water stop flowing so the Israelites could walk across on dry land! God told the people what to do, and they did what God said. Some of God's people held a special box called the ark of the covenant and carried it into the water. When they did, the water stopped flowing, and there was dry ground for them to walk on! All the people walked across. Push aside the paper and stand in the middle of the river. Invite the kids to walk with you, through the "dry" part of the river. Have kids sit on the other side of the river for the rest of the story. Leave the stones or gray papers on the floor.

When all the Israelites made it across the river, 12 of the Israelites got stones from the riverbed and put them in a pile. These stones would remind them that God took care of them and made a way through the river so they could get to the special land for their home. Encourage kids to make a pile of stones like they did in the opening activity. **The Israelites knew that the pile of stones was a reminder of what God did for them. God made a way for them, and He makes a way for us! We can trust and follow God. He was with the Israelites, and God is with us too.**

Word of Wonder

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible, Problems and Promises 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 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.*

Prayer and Blessing

WHAT YOU SAY: Let's pray and talk to God and thank Him for how He guides us and how He keeps His promises.

God, thank You for Your promise to always be with us and to make a way for us even when we go through hard times. Help us follow Your Holy Spirit and trust You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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 Activity: Follow Me (if you need to fill more time)

WHAT YOU NEED: various small toys (can gather from around the room)

WHAT YOU DO: Ahead of time, set out various toys and "obstacles" all over a large area in your room, leaving space for kids to walk around the toys to get from one side of the room to the other. Have kids line up and take turns leading the line through the obstacles of toys to get from one side of the room to the other.

WHAT YOU SAY: Be careful not to step on any toys! Make sure to follow the leader as the leader leads everyone around the toys safely to the other side of the room. Give all the kids a chance to be the leader.

The Israelites had a leader named Joshua, and they also had God as their leader. God led them through some scary things and took care of them. They followed God and trusted Him to help them get to the land He promised them for a home. We can trust and follow God too. He is always there for us and will make a way for us to get through anything that we face.