

Sunday, September 13th

READ THIS!

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: [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

LEADER PREP PAGE 2

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READ THIS!

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.

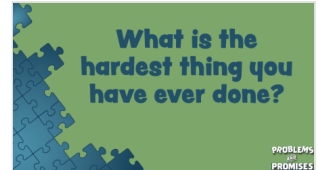
CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

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 ...

Greet each kid by name. Introduce kids to one another, pairing new kids with friendly regulars to help them feel welcome. Read the Welcome Question aloud to younger kids and help them get started by suggesting examples of hard things, such as running a mile or finishing a big school project. Invite kids to draw their answers, if they prefer.

At your start time ...

Welcome the whole group and invite a couple of kids to share their answers to the Welcome Question: **ASK: 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.**

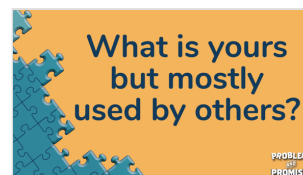
Interactive Game: That Doesn't Seem Possible!

WHAT YOU NEED: beanbag, That Doesn't Seem Possible! Slides, [Jordan Wonder Truth Slide](#)

Display the first [That Doesn't Seem Possible! Slide](#). Invite kids to form a circle and sit down. **We're going to play a game called That Doesn't Seem Possible! I'll show you a brainteaser. As you discuss the answer, you'll pass a beanbag around the circle. Does that sound easy?** Allow kids to respond. **It might not be as easy as it sounds because I'm going to give you some challenges to complete as you pass the beanbag.**



Advance to the second [That Doesn't Seem Possible! Slide](#) and read the brainteaser out loud. Then, as kids discuss the answer together, challenge them to pass the beanbag around the circle using only their elbows. Once they have one or more answers, reveal the answer. Go through all six brainteasers and their answers.



Each time you give kids the next brainteaser to discuss, also give them a new challenging way to pass the beanbag/ball. Here are some challenges to choose from: Pass the beanbag/ball by holding it between their feet (they must be seated on the floor to do this safely), pass it while holding it with only one finger of each hand, or pass it by balancing it on the back of one hand.

For your reference, these are the brainteasers:

1. [What is yours but mostly used by others?](#) (*your name*)
2. [What goes up but never comes down?](#) (*your age*)
3. [What's bright and orange with green on top and sounds like parrot?](#) (*a carrot*)
4. [Which question can you never answer yes to?](#) (*Are you asleep?*)
5. [I'm light as a feather, yet the strongest person can't hold me for five minutes. What am I?](#) (*your breath*)
6. [We went through a river, but our feet walked on dry ground. Who are we?](#) (*the Israelites*)

Wow! Those questions were challenging, and at first, a solution didn't seem possible.

It can be difficult for our brains to imagine solutions to different problems. We're limited by what we think we know or have already accomplished. Fortunately, God knows no limits, and He can solve any challenge. Display the [Jordan Wonder Truth Slide](#). **Today's Wonder Truth is [GOD CAN MAKE A WAY THROUGH ANYTHING](#).**



Declaring God's Wonder

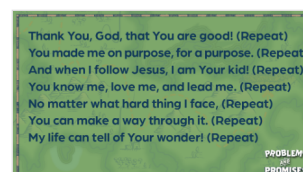
WHAT YOU NEED: Jordan Declaration Slide [Option 1](#)

Display the Jordan Declaration Slide [Option 1](#) and read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)



You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

No matter what hard thing I face, (Kids repeat.)

You can make a way through it. (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Belief

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

God's Big Story

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles (1 per kid), [Jordan Title Slide](#),



Display the [Jordan Title Slide](#). Explain that today's story picks up in the third chapter of the book of Joshua as the Israelites are preparing to cross the Jordan River and enter the good land God had promised them. Invite kids to find Joshua chapter 3 in their Bibles.

Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible.

Invite kids to put one finger on the big chapter number "3" in their Bibles as you read [Joshua 3:5, 7-8, 11-17](#) and [4:1-3, 5-7](#) aloud. (Some may want to follow along, but because you'll skip some verses, let them know when you start moving around in the Scripture.)

Then do one or both of the following:

- Use the following Crossing the Jordan River Experience It! Script
- View [Crossing the Jordan River God's Big Story Video](#)

In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

Is there any part of this story that made you think, "That's not possible"? Help your group to recall the various details of the story and spot God's hand in the details.

Imagine that you're one of the priests selected to carry the ark. How would you feel about being asked to go first and stand in the middle of the river? Allow kids time to imagine standing at the edge of the river. Reassure kids that there is no right or wrong answer. Encourage them to share their initial responses.

Word of Wonder Activity

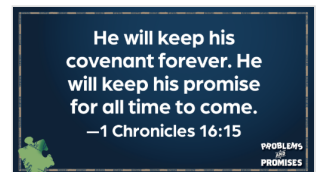
WORD OF WONDER

He will keep his covenant forever. He will keep his promise for all time to come.

—1 Chronicles 16:15 (NirV)

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

Our Word of Wonder for the Problems and Promises series reminds us that God remembers His promises and is faithful to keep them! Let's say the verse together now. Open your Bible to [1 Chronicles 16:15](#). Display the Word of Wonder Slide [NirV](#). Read the verse several times together, have them repeat back to you, encourage memorization, give tips on how to practice the memory verse!



1 Chronicles 16:15 NirV:

**He will keep his
covenant forever**

**He will keep his promise
For all time to come**

Review & Ponder Questions

- **When the Israelites came to the Jordan River, what was on the other side?** *(the land God had promised—Canaan and the city of Jericho)*
- **What did God ask the priests to carry into the river? What was significant about what they carried?** *(the ark of the covenant, which was a wooden box covered in gold that represented the presence of God on the earth)*

- **What happened as soon as the priests put their feet into the water?** *(The water piled up in a heap far down the river; the river stopped flowing.)*
- **The river that separated the Israelites from their new home was over 120 miles long and very deep. How do you imagine the Israelites felt when they first saw the river? How would you have reacted?**
- **How many stones did God ask the Israelites to gather from the riverbed?** *(12)* **Why this number?** *(one stone for each of the 12 tribes, or families, of Israel)* **What did they do with them?** *(Set them up as a reminder of how God made a way for them through the Jordan River.)*
- **What is something hard you've experienced? How has God helped you get through that hard thing?**
- **What's a challenge you're facing now?**

God's people wanted to enter the land God had promised as their new home! But the sight of the deep, overflowing river in their way was probably quite scary! We aren't trying to cross the Jordan River, but all of us experience hard things in life. Let's talk with God in prayer and ask Him to remind us that He can make a way through anything.

Leader Tip: Sadly, some kids may be experiencing abuse, neglect, or other trauma. While God can make a way through hard situations, what matters most is that kids know God loves them and is with them in the hard things—and that God is not OK with anyone hurting them. If you suspect abuse, share your concerns with your ministry leader right away.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Remembrance Stones

WHAT YOU NEED: cardstock, blue painter's tape, coloring utensils, [Stones Sheet](#) (1 per 2 kids), [Remembrance Stones Slide](#)

Ahead of time, print one copy of the [Stones Sheet](#) for every two kids onto cardstock, using two-sided printing with the flip on the long edge. Cut out each stone. Use blue painter's tape to create two long lines (a few feet apart from each other). The space between the tape will represent the Jordan River.

Display the [Remembrance Stones Slide](#) and gather the kids. **Today in God's big story, God asked the Israelites to gather 12 stones from the middle of the river. When they reached the other side of the river, they set up the 12 stones at the place they camped. Why do you think they did this?** Pause for responses. **Good ideas! God wanted the Israelites and their future children to remember how God made a way for His people through the Jordan River. Every time the people saw the 12 stones, they would remember what God had done to bring them through the river on dry ground! Let's create our own stones of remembrance as a way of thanking God for what He's done in our lives and to remember that He can make a way through anything.**

Set out coloring utensils and give a paper stone to each kid. Lead kids into a time of quiet reflection where they can remember a time when God led them through a difficult situation or time in life. Invite them to draw a picture of the hard situation on one side of their stone. On the opposite side of the stone, kids can draw a picture or symbol to show how God made a way through that challenge. Offer a few ideas to help kids get started. For example, they may have struggled in school, but God was with them and helped them. They could draw a classroom scene on one side of the stone and, on the other, themselves smiling beside a cross and heart to show God was with them.

Once finished, invite kids to cross the river and place their stones on the other side. Once all the kids have finished, those who are willing can share their remembrance stones. Remind kids to share both the challenge and how God made a way through the challenge. After each person shares, repeat the Wonder Truth as a group: **GOD CAN MAKE A WAY THROUGH ANYTHING!**

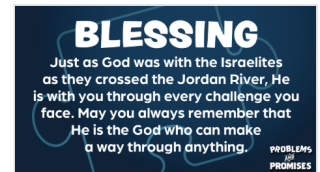


Make It Inclusive: If some kids struggle to focus or understand and follow instructions, pair them with a peer helper or offer them a seat near a leader who can encourage and help them as needed.

Blessing Your Kids

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

Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.



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.