



SESSION 1 of 4

Joshua

MEETING AIM

To discover that it's OK to feel scared and that we can have courage because God is with us.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 1

BACKGROUND

Moses led the Israelites into the Promised Land, and when he died God chose Joshua to take over. Joshua, who began his life as a slave, became a powerful leader who was used by God to lead an army to victory.

God tells Joshua to "be strong and courageous" three times in Joshua 1. However, he isn't telling Joshua to be brave and get over his fear; he's telling him to have courage because God is with him.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the children to sit together in a circle and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays or special events. It can be helpful to have an object or cuddly toy to pass around for the children to hold as they speak. Ask them: "What helps you feel brave?" Thank God that he's with you and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: a box; a blindfold; various items with different textures, such as soft fabric, rough sandpaper and water

Invite a child to be blindfolded and place one of the items in the box. Invite the blindfolded children to put a hand inside the box and guess what the item is. Let them take it in turns while you put lots of different things to feel inside.

Chat about how it might feel a bit scary to be blindfolded and not know what you're about to feel.

10 BIBLE STORY

Explain to the group that as you listen to today's story you're going to play Follow the Leader. Joshua was able to be a brave, strong leader because he knew that God was with him. Invite the children to listen carefully and watch for actions to copy. You might want to teach them the actions before you read the story, or you can do them as you go along.

God's people had been wandering in the desert for a really long time: 40 years, in fact. *March on the spot.* God had looked after them. He had been teaching them how to trust and listen to him. *Cup your hand to your ear.*

Moses had been leading the people. He had led them to the special land God had promised them. *March on the spot.* Sadly, Moses then died. *Make a sad face.* God gave them a new leader called Joshua.

God spoke to Joshua: "I want you to lead my people into the land I have promised them. You need to get ready to cross the Jordan River. Just like I promised Moses, I will be with you everywhere you go. No one will be able to hurt you. I will be with you. Be strong and courageous. Listen to what I say and do what I ask you to do. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid because I will be with you wherever you go." *Invite the children to come up with an action for 'strong and courageous'.* *Copy the actions different children suggest.*

So Joshua told the people: "Go and get everyone ready. In three days' time we're going to cross the river and take the land God is giving us." *Mime packing bags.*

The people answered Joshua and said: "We'll do whatever you ask us and go wherever you send us. We did what Moses asked us to do, and we will do the same for you. We pray that God will be with you just as he was with Moses. We will protect you. Be strong and courageous!" *Do one or two of the actions the children thought of earlier.*

Joshua was probably nervous. Moses had been a really great leader, and the Promised Land God said they would live in already had people in it. It wasn't going to be easy for them!

In this part of the Bible, God tells Joshua to be "strong and courageous" three times. He doesn't just say: "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid." He says: "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, because I am with you."

God was with Joshua. *Do another 'strong and courageous' action.*

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute (use your object or cuddly toy if you passed one around earlier):

- What was your favourite part of the story?
- How do you think Joshua felt when God told him he would lead all those people?
- What does it mean to be brave?
- When do you need to be brave in your life?
- How can God help you be brave?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: badges or stickers with Joshua 1:9 printed on; collage materials; glue; pens or pencils

God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because he was with him everywhere he went. God says we can be brave because he is with us. Invite each child to decorate a badge or sticker they can wear to remind them that God is with them wherever they go.

As you chat, talk about the different times the children might need to be brave. What does God being with you feel like? Share a story from your own life to illustrate this so the children have an idea of how this can be worked out in practice.

5 PRAYER

Invite the children to share a time or place where they don't feel brave. Ask that God would help them feel strong and courageous, and to know that he is with them. Pray this prayer together:

Thank you, God, that you are always with us wherever we go. *Invite the children to name all the different places they go.* Thank you, God, that you are with me. Amen.

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SESSION 2 of 4

Rahab

MEETING AIM

To think about how Rahab chose to trust God and live differently compared with those around her.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 2

BACKGROUND

Canaanite prostitute Rahab is perhaps an unlikely hero, but she demonstrates incredible faith and courage. When she chooses to hide the spies she does so because she believes what she has heard about God and is making a choice to live differently compared with her people. We see the grace of God demonstrated through her story as she is forgiven for the bad choices she has made in her life and becomes part of the line of Christ. The focus in this chapter is on how she chooses to trust God and the way he invites her into his plan.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the children to sit together in a circle and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays or special events. It can be helpful to have an object or cuddly toy to pass around for the children to hold as they speak. Ask them: "Have you ever helped someone? What happened?" Thank God that he is with you and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: items to hide around the room (optional)

Invite the children to spy out information for you. For example, ask them to find something unusual in your building. They could count how many lights there are in the hallway or discover what colour the chairs are in the church hall.

You could also hide some items around your room (and even outside if you are able to go further afield) for the children to find.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: reeds, straw or similar (or you could use a large brown piece of material); a rope; red rope or fabric

Explain that today's story is about someone who helped the Israelites. This someone was brave and chose to help even though others might not have. Tell the children this story:

Rahab lived in the land of Jericho. She wasn't part of God's people and she had made bad choices, but God had a plan for her.

When Joshua and the Israelites arrived at their new home it was already full of people. Joshua secretly sent two spies to have a look at the land.

The two spies came to Rahab's house to stay the night. *Invite some children to be spies and come to you.*

The King of Jericho had heard that there were spies in the city, and he sent soldiers to find them! So Rahab hid the spies. *Invite the children to help you 'hide your spies' with the reeds, straw or material. Ask two of the children to be soldiers.*

Rahab told the soldiers that the spies had been there but had left, and she didn't know where they had gone. She said: "Go after them quickly and you might catch up with them!" So the men rushed out to try to catch the spies. *The 'soldiers' do so.*

But they didn't find them because Rahab had been hiding the spies on her roof. She had hidden them under stalks of flax, which is a bit like long grass.

Rahab said to the spies: "I know that God has given you this land. We've heard about the awesome things he has done. He dried up the water in the Red Sea! We know how powerful your God is. Because I have helped look after you, please say that you'll look after me and my family and keep us safe."

The spies agreed.

Rahab let them down out of her window by a rope and told them to run to the hills where they could hide. *Encourage the children to take turns pretending to climb down the rope.*

They told Rahab to tie a red rope to her window so the Israelites would know to protect her when they came to the city. *Tie your red rope or fabric to a chair.*

The spies went on their way, and for three days they hid from the soldiers. They finally returned to Joshua and told him all about what they had seen. Rahab was remembered for the way she had welcomed the spies and chosen to trust God.

Rahab chose to live differently from and more courageously than those around her, and God included her in his big rescue plan for his people. God loves people no matter what choices they have made in their lives, and he loves to draw them close to him.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute (use your object or cuddly toy if you passed one around earlier):

- What was your favourite part of the story?
- How do you think the spies felt?
- Why do you think Rahab helped them?
- How do you think the people in the city might have felt if they had known that Rahab was helping the spies?

10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: red ribbon or wool; beads and sequins

The spies told Rahab to hang a piece of red rope from her window so that the Israelites would remember how she had helped them and protect her whole family. Rahab hung the red cord out to say: "Yes, I want to be part of God's plan!"

Show the children how to thread beads and sequins onto a piece of wool or ribbon to make a red bracelet. Alternatively, you could plait the strands together. As you work, chat about the story and what it means to be part of God's plan. Share a story from your own life so the children can hear about faith in action.

5 PRAYER

You will need: bracelets from 'Creative response'

Invite the children to pray for one another while wearing their bracelets. Stand in a circle and either hold hands or put your hand on the shoulder of the person next to you:

God, thank you that you love each one of us, and that you invite us all to be a part of your big plans. Thank you that we are part of [insert your group name]. Help us to trust you, to be brave and courageous, and to follow you even if the people around us choose not to.

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SESSION 3 of 4

Crossing the river

MEETING AIM

To think about how important it is to reflect and thank God for his faithfulness.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 3-4

BACKGROUND

This passage marks the crossing of the boundary into the Promised Land and parallels the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14-15). God reminds the Israelites of his promises and faithfulness in this passage. He renews their faith and strengthens them ahead of the next challenge. The focus in this session is on their remembering God's faithfulness, helping the children to reflect and do this in their own lives.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the children to sit together in a circle and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays or special events. It can be helpful to have an object or cuddly toy to pass around for the children to hold as they speak. Ask them: "What do you do to help you remember things?" Thank God that he is with you, and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

10 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: paper; felt-tip pens or crayons; collage materials

Ask the children what they are thankful for today. You might need to give them some examples, such as the people who look after them, food or friends at playgroup, nursery or your church group. Can they think of a really special memory, maybe from a time when they knew that God was with them? Invite the children to make a collage picture to help them remember and to thank God for it.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: twelve stones made from scrunched-up paper; a washing-up bowl (or other big container) filled with water; an empty bowl of the same size; towels
Before the session, hide the twelve stones around the room. Gather the children together and tell this story:

Joshua was the leader of the Israelites, God's people. Joshua and the Israelites were almost in the land that God had promised them, but first they needed to cross the Jordan River. The river lay between them and the land.

Joshua got his people ready to cross the river. They camped next to the river for three days, just as God had told them to. *All lie down and pretend to be asleep.*

The river was so full of water that it was flooded. The water was so deep that they wouldn't have been able to walk across. *Mime walking through water.*

God told Joshua to tell the people that the priests were going to carry the Ark of the Covenant (a wooden chest covered in gold, where they kept the Ten Commandments) and lead the people through the water.

He told the priests to step into the flowing water, and that if they did so the water would stop flowing. *Invite the children, in turn, to take their shoes off and step into the bowl of water. You could also use a jug and pour water over their feet.*

When they did this the water stopped and the Israelites walked through to the other side. *Invite the children to dry their feet and then step into the empty bowl. How do the two bowls feel?*

The priests stayed standing in the empty river while everyone else crossed over. God told Joshua to tell twelve men to collect stones from the ground where the priests were standing. *Challenge the children to find your hidden 'stones'.*

When the priests carried on walking the river carried on flowing. *Pour water into your empty container to represent the flowing water.*

They brought the stones into their camp and built a memorial so they could remember what God had done and remember to tell people for years to come. *Invite them to place the stones on top of one another.*

This story is a lot like when God stopped the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape from the Egyptians. God was reminding his people of how he had been with them before, was still with them at this time, and would be with them as they went into the land he had promised them.

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute (use your object or cuddly toy if you passed one around earlier):

- What was your favourite part of the story?
- How do you think the Israelites felt when the river was flowing too quickly to cross?
- How do you think it felt to see the water stop flowing?

- What did the Israelites do to help them remember the way God had been with them?
- What do you do to remember that God is with you? (Share an example from your own life.)

5 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: jelly; a long plate or piece of new, clean guttering; spoons

Before the session, create a jelly river by filling a long plate or length of guttering.

Divide the group into two teams or do this activity all together, depending on how many children you have, and invite the children to sit around the jelly river. Ask them questions about today's session and story. Every time someone gets an answer right they can all eat a spoonful of jelly until it's clear to cross! Chat about how exciting it is to be able to cross over. How did the people of God feel about crossing the river?

If you have children with allergies, or you want to do it without introducing food, you could sip or scoop out some water each time instead.

5 PRAYER

You will need: stones or building blocks

Remind the group that the people of God created a memorial out of stones so they could remember how he had looked after them. Invite the children to build their own group memorial, with each person placing a stone or block in a central pile. Invite them to say thank you to God for something he has done as they place them down.

Finish by saying: "Thank you, God, that you are with us, that you have been with us in the past and that you will be with us in the future."

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SESSION 4 of 4

Jericho

MEETING AIM

To think about how Joshua trusted God's plan and was brave because God was with him.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 6

BACKGROUND

The Israelites have spent 40 years in the desert. They've spied out the land, crossed the River Jordan and are ready to go in. Jericho is surrounded by a huge wall, so the task of conquering the city would have seemed impossible. Joshua followed God's instructions and gave God all the glory when the impossible happened. It wasn't down to his talents or a plan he came up with. The Israelite people fully trusted in God, and he went with them into 'battle'.

5 CIRCLE TIME

Invite the children to sit together in a circle and encourage them to share stories from their week. Celebrate any birthdays or special events. It can be helpful to have an object or cuddly toy to pass around for the children to hold as they speak. Ask them: "Who's the bravest person you know?" Thank God that he's with you and ask him to help you learn more about him today.

5 INTRO ACTIVITY

You will need: a selection of building blocks, such as Lego or Duplo (or bigger blocks such as cardboard boxes)

Use the blocks to build a big wall. You could do this all together if you have a small group or let the children play with the blocks individually or in smaller groups if you have plenty to go around.

10 BIBLE STORY

You will need: building blocks or shoeboxes; a box; musical instruments

Build a wall together and sit around it as you begin to tell this story:

Joshua and the people of God had almost reached the Promised Land. They had sent in their spies, who met Rahab, and then they had crossed the River Jordan. They were camped near the city of Jericho.

Jericho was surrounded by big walls, and it had heavy gates. The city was shut off because the people inside it were scared of the people of God.

The people of God wondered how they would be able to get in, but God had promised them the land and he knew what to do.

God told Joshua his plan. It was a strange plan, and maybe Joshua was surprised by it. But he trusted God and he listened.

Joshua gathered the soldiers together. They had their weapons ready but the plan wasn't to fight. *Invite some of the children to stand up and be the soldiers. Ask some to be the priests and to carry a box that represents the Ark of the Covenant.*

Priests carried the Ark of the Covenant (a wooden chest covered in gold, where they kept the Ten Commandments), and seven priests walked in front of it blowing a ram's horn (which was a bit like a trumpet). *Give these children a musical instrument to play.* The army marched around the city once with the priests but they didn't make any noise.

They did this for six days. *Walk around your wall six times.* On the seventh day, God told them to march around the city seven times. On the seventh time around, the priests blew their horns. Joshua said to the army: "Shout, because God has given you this city!"

They all made as much noise as they possibly could, and the big, strong walls fell down! *Ask the children to play their instruments, shout and knock your wall down.*

The Israelites took over the city of Jericho as God had told them to do. They looked after Rahab and her family just as they had promised.

Joshua was strong and courageous because he knew that God was with him. The plan had probably sounded a bit ridiculous, so when the walls fell down everyone knew that it was God who had made the impossible happen. It was because Joshua trusted God and followed him.

If the children are keen, then tell the story again, enjoying marching around and playing the instruments

5 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute (use your object or cuddly toy if you passed one around earlier):

- What was your favourite part of the story?
- Imagine you were there. How do you think you would have felt when it seemed so impossible?
- How do you think you would have felt walking around the city seven times?
- And how about when the wall fell down?

- What makes you feel brave when you're scared? What helped Joshua feel brave and courageous?

5 CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: building blocks you can write or draw on (or brick-shaped paper and Blu tack); felt-tip pens

Explain that God doesn't just say: "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid." He says: "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, *because I am with you.*" He is with us when we're feeling scared and nervous. God says: "I am with you." Whenever we feel as though there is a big wall in the way, God says: "I am with you." We can choose to be brave because we know that God is with us. We don't have to pretend everything is OK or that we don't feel scared, but we can trust that he is always with us wherever we go.

Invite the children to write or draw the things on the bricks (or on paper bricks) that stop them feeling close to God, or the places where they feel afraid. Build a wall and then remind them that they can be strong and courageous because God is with them as you knock it down. There is no wall between us and God; he is with us. Knock or tear your wall down to represent this.

5 PRAYER

Invite the children to settle in a comfortable space away from the others and spend some time 'catching' from him. Allow time and space for them to connect with him. You might also want to invite the children to say out loud the places where they want to know that God is with them, and to pray that they would know him in those places. Encourage the children to share what God is saying to them if they would like to.

For more about 'catching' from God, visit parentingforfaith.org/chat-and-catch.

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