

CROSSING THE JORDAN**Joshua 3-5**

Lesson Memory Verse: Psalm 121:2 – “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

Lesson Aim: To teach the children to believe God and depend on Him to help them.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): I am going to tell you a story about a deer. This deer was walking around the forest just before hunting season thinking to himself. “Why should I run from those hunters? I have a fine pair of horns and some nice sharp hoofs. I will show them. I will fight off the hunters and I will win.” Just then he heard the snapping of twigs and the rustling of leaves. The hunters were coming! Suddenly, the deer lost his bravery. Instead of fighting the hunters he used his powerful legs to leap away into the forest. Was this a wise deer or a foolish one when he ran off into the forest?

Our lesson today tells about one time when Israelites trusted God to help them. They acted wisely like the deer, when he heard the hunters coming. Just like the deer ran into the forest for safety, so they ran to God for safety.

HE (for Authority): Think about our memory verse for today and tell me what God will do for us. (He will help us.) What has God already done that shows He can help us? (He made heaven and earth.)

Last week we learned that Rahab trusted God, so how did God help her? (When the walls of Jericho fell down, the part of the wall where her house was located did not fall down.) How did God help the spies? (He kept them from being captured and they got back to their camp safely.) In today's lesson, Israel had to cross the Jordan River, but it was flood time and the river was wide and very dangerous. They did not have a bridge to help them cross the river, nor did they have boats to help them. So how did they do it?

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scriptures for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Today's true Bible story will tell us how God helped them cross the Jordan River. This story should help you believe that God will help you, too, when you trust Him and obey His command.

I. Crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 3-4)

A. Making ready for the crossing (3:1-13)

They spent three days by the Jordan River before they crossed it (3:1). They were to give special attention to the Ark of the Covenant and follow it. It signified the presence of God with them. They needed to remember that it was God Who was leading them and helping them (3:1-4). (Show a picture of the Ark of the Covenant, if possible.)

WE: When we are in trouble or have a problem, what should we do first? (Keep your eyes on God. Go to Him in prayer.)

They were to sanctify themselves (3:5), that is, they were to remove all sins in their lives and be ready to obey His commands.

WE: What is the second thing that we should do when we have a problem? (Remove all sins in our lives and be ready to obey God's commands.) Explain how we remove sins. We confess them to God and stop doing them (Prov 28:13; 1 Jn 1:9).

They were told by Joshua how God was going to stop the Jordan when the priests carrying the ark put their feet into the water and how they were to move quickly to the other side (3:6-13).

WE: What is the third thing that we should do when we have a problem? (We should know what God says about our problem in the Bible, so we know what He wants us to do. If you do not know what He says, go to one of God's leaders and find out from them what God says in the Bible about your problem. Read it for yourself. Then we should quickly do what God says.)

If we do these three things (keep your eyes on the Lord, remove all sins in our lives, and be ready to do what He says in the Bible), we will have God's help.

B. Miracle of the Crossing (3:14-17)

When the priests carrying the ark put their feet in the Jordan, God saw their faith and their obedience and He stopped the river (3:14-16a).

WE: When we obey God, we prove that we have faith in Him. Let us prove that we have faith in God.

The waters, it seems, were stopped at Adam, a city about 15 miles up the river. This gave a wide area for all the people to cross in one day (3:16). God gave the people more than they expected when He gave them a large area over which to cross the Jordan. It would have taken a long, long time to get one or two million people to cross the river if they had to go over in one long line.

WE: God often surprises us when He gives us far more than we expected (Eph. 3:20). We should be quick to praise Him when He gives more than we expected.

The priests with the ark remained in the middle of the river bed until all the people had crossed to the other side (3:17). This would remind the people that it was God who stopped the river.

WE: We must never forget that it is God who helps us. We cannot see Him, but He is there.

C. Memorial of the Crossing (4:1-24)

Twelve stones were taken from the Jordan River bed and carried to the Israelite's camp (4:1-8, 20-24), one stone for each tribe. These stones were piled up to remind them and their children of the time when they crossed the Jordan River with God's help.

Another twelve stones were piled up in the middle of the river bed at the place where the priests had stood with the ark (14:9-18). This was another reminder of how God had helped them cross the Jordan River.

As soon as the priests left the river bed with the ark, the river flooded the area once more (4:18).

WE: God wants us to remember some things He has done for us, too. He wants us to remember what Jesus Christ did for us. He has given us two memorials: baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Explain the meaning of these memorials). We need to be baptized after we asked Jesus to save us and changed our lives. Have you been baptized since you trusted Jesus to save you? After we are saved, we also need to remember Jesus' suffering and death on the cross by eating the Lord's Supper.

II. Cleansing for Battle (5)

A. Sin was removed (5:2-10)

Before they went into battle they needed to be fully identified as God's people and remove their sin. They obeyed the Lord.

WE: Before we can fight the Lord's battles, we must remove every sin from our lives by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:7). We must confess every sin or else we will be defeated by Satan.

B. Submission to the Lord (5:13-15)

Joshua was an important leader, but a Captain was above him. This Captain was the Lord. He bowed before Him and was ready to take orders from Him.

WE: Before we can fight the Lord's battles we must recognize that the Lord Jesus is our Captain. We must do what He tells us to do, or else we will be defeated by Satan.

BE (for Action): Does God always keep His promises? Yes, always. We cannot find one promise in the Bible that He has not kept. Sometimes He waits until the right time to keep His promises, but He always keeps His promises. Can we say that about our closest friends? No, we can't. Even though we love them and trust them, they sometimes fail us because they are not perfect. But God is perfect. We can depend on Him; He will always keep His promises to guide us and comfort us.

Are you depending on God? You can depend on Him to take away your sins. (Explain salvation.) You can depend on Him to help you with all your daily problems. (Homework, trouble with friends, trouble with parents, etc.) Trust Him like the Israelites did when they crossed the Jordan River.