

# The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Bible Point

**God helps us be brave...so we thank him.**

## Purpose

You're standing at the starting line, with myriad obstacles before you. There's a reward at the end, but in the middle lie challenges to overcome. You take a deep breath and push forward.

Does life ever feel that way? Whatever the promise, there are usually challenges to meet along the way. Here's the good news: When it's God's promise, he's with us and he'll make a way. God spoke words of courage and reassurance to Joshua, and his Holy Spirit is still whispering those words to us today.

In disbelief, kids may say, "No way!" With this lesson, tell them, "Yes way!" God will make a way for them—to make new friends, finish their math homework, and help their families. And when God does make a way, we say "thank you" and keep following.



## Prayer

Thank you, God, for your faithfulness in the past and your promise to be with me today and every day. Thank you for bringing these children into my life. Give me your courage as I lead them today. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Prep

| Opening Options   | Sing & Play  | Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale   | Apply-It Options  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Surface Tension</i>: water, clear cups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Build-a-Bead</i>: pony beads, chenille wire</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> countdown video*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rockette Bible Memory Buddy poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> media player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Joshua 1:9)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "The Israelites Cross the Jordan River" Bible Story poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rockette Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 2, Week 3) (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Joshua 3:1-5, 17-4:3, 5-8)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> masking tape</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> cups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> markers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles, paper (half sheet per person), pencils, large container of water, clear cups, tape</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: no supplies</li> </ul> |

\* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



# Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



## Surface Tension

**Supplies:** water, clear cups

Fill one cup with water, and flip another cup upside down. Use the tips of your fingers to drop water onto the upside-down cup. See how many drops you can add without water spilling over the edge.

**?** What's something surprising that happened to you recently?

We kept adding more and more water, and you may have felt a little nervous that it'd spill over. But a scientific principle called *surface tension* makes the water droplets stick together. We can thank God for all the times he's stuck with us no matter what. **God helps us be brave.**

## Build-a-Bead

**Supplies:** pony beads, chenille wires

Build something out of pony beads and chenille wires.

**?** What's the coolest building or statue you've ever seen?

In our Bible story, God's people built a memorial to remember how God had guided and provided for them. Even though they weren't sure what the future would bring, God helped them be brave and gave them courage to move forward. **God helps us be brave, too.**

# Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options! Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

## Sing & Play

It's so good to see you today! I know a lot of different things have happened in your lives over the past week. You might have a lot of tough stuff on your mind, or you might be excited and ready for a new day. Without saying a word, show me with your face how you're feeling today. Ready? Pause for kids to think. **Go!** Pause.

Thanks for sharing with me, friends. Whether you're worried, happy, sad, or excited, God is with you no matter what. Let's sing about that!



"No Matter What I'm Facing" music video

### Bible Point

Today we're discovering how **God helps us be brave**. That's our Bible Point, so every time you hear someone say the words "**God helps us be brave**," I want you to respond in a certain way. Do what I do!

- Place hands on hips like a superhero and say, "We're brave!"
- Repeat several times.

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "We're brave!"

God's helped us so much in the past, and he'll continue to help us in the future. Let's thank God with a song.



"Thankful" music video



We're brave!

### Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Music Video* DVD
  - "No Matter What I'm Facing" music video
  - "Thankful" music video
  - "I'm Trusting You" music video
- *Buddy Video* DVD
  - Rockette Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 3)
- Rockette Bible Memory Buddy poster



## Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

I'm thankful that Rockette the flying squirrel is our Bible Memory Buddy. Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **How much do you know about flying squirrels? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about Rockette and her flying squirrel friends. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!**

- ? What noise do flying squirrels make? Do they bark or chirp?**
- Have everyone bark like a dog to vote for *this* (bark) or chirp like a bird to vote for *that* (chirp).
  - Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
  - Dramatically give the answer: **Flying squirrels make all kinds of squeaks, clicks, and chirps when they communicate. So chirping it is. Let's find out more!**
  - Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video.



**Rockette Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 3)**



Show the Bible. **Rockette helps us remember our Bible Memory Verse. The Bible is God's true story of love! The Bible was originally written in three different languages. Today it's in hundreds of languages so people around the world can understand it. Let's say the verse together—in our language. I'll say a line, and then you repeat it after me.**

**"Be strong and courageous!** *(make muscles)*  
**Do not be afraid or discouraged.** *(shake head "no")*  
**For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."** *(hug self)*  
(Joshua 1:9)

God said these words to Israel's new leader, Joshua, when Joshua took over for Moses. God had a special—and difficult—job for Joshua to do. But Joshua didn't have to figure it out by himself. God would lead and help Joshua be brave, and **God helps us be brave, too.** *(We're brave!)*

Even when life feels a bit wild, we can trust that God will see us through. Let's sing about trusting God.



**"I'm Trusting You" music video**

# Bible Discovery

## Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Arrange kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
  - Invite kids to stand in close circles with their Connect Crews.
  - Have kids give their Crew Guides a foot-five and then sit down.
  - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **Would you rather swim in a swimming pool or the ocean? Tell why.**

## Experience the Bible Story

In our Bible story today, we'll discover that God's people, the Israelites, didn't have to swim in a pool, an ocean, or even a river! God was leading them to the land he'd promised to give them. It wasn't always safe or easy, but God helped them be brave, and **God helps us be brave, too!** (*We're brave!*)

**The story begins on the banks of the Jordan River. Let's imagine the Jordan River runs right down the center of this room. This tape will help.** Make two tape lines about 10 feet apart down the center of your room. Then move to one side of the "river."

**You all are the Israelites, and I'll be Joshua. Israelites, come on over here with me to this side of the river.** Pause as everyone joins you at the "bank" of the river, facing the other side. **We have to get over there, but this river is an obstacle in our way.**

**Okay, I need a leader from each Crew to come receive a message. The person in your Crew who's wearing the most blue today will be the leader. Decide who that is, then send that person over to me.** Pause while Crews decide.

**This will work kind of like the "Telephone Game." I'll whisper a sentence to each leader. Then, leaders, you'll go back to your Crews and whisper the sentence to one person, who'll whisper it to the next person, continuing around your Crew circle. The last person to receive the message will wait, and then all Crews will shout out the message together. Got it?**

Whisper this sentence to the leader from each Crew: **When you see the priests carrying the Ark, follow them, but not too close.** Then send the leaders back to their Crews to relay the message.

## Supplies

- Bible
- "The Israelites Cross the Jordan River" Bible Story poster
- masking tape
- small paper cups (1 per child)
- markers

We call helpers Crew Guides. If you lead a small class, you can be the Crew Guide. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!



Okay, on the count of three, shout out the message from the leaders. One, two, three! Laugh together if the message got a little garbled.

Let's read the actual message from the Bible.



Read aloud Joshua 3:1-5.

Okay, Israelites, get ready! Tomorrow God will do something amazing for you. But for now, let's set up camp and get some rest. Act this out with me. First, gather firewood. Pause. Then roast some hot dogs for supper. Not too burned, please! Pause. Finally, read a bedtime story. Pause. Then go to bed. Have everyone lay their heads on their hands and pretend to sleep.

In a sing-songy voice, say: **All of God's people, rise and shine!**

I've already given the priests some directions. Do you see them there by the riverbank? Point to the tape line. You may have to use your imaginations. See them now? Encourage everyone to say "yes."

I told those priests to lift up the Ark of the Covenant. That's a special box that helps us remember God's presence with us.

The priests are to carry the Ark and lead all you fine folks across the Jordan River. It's a bit flooded due to the rain season. But God told me to tell them to take a few steps into the river and then freeze! Well, not freeze their toesies; I meant for them to stop moving through the water.

Point toward the imaginary priests again. **Look! The priests stopped. And the water stopped moving, too. It had been a flooded, flowing river. But now the water isn't flowing anymore!** Look toward one end of your "river." **Look upstream with me!** Shield your eyes with your hand as you all look. **Way up there! I wish I had binoculars, but they haven't been invented yet. It looks like a water wall! It's piling up near a town called Adam. And it's leaving the riverbed here dry and clear!**

We're going to walk across the river. I know it's a little scary. You never know when that water wall may crash down again and sweep us away. But **God helps us be brave.** (*We're brave!*) **God's made a way for us Israelites before, and I know he won't let us down.** Gather everyone in a huddle with hands in the center, and on the count of three, shout, "Cross the river!"

Welcome a few responses. Be sure to summarize what kids say so everyone can hear.

Walk toward the tape, then stop and point to the imaginary priests again. **Watch out for those priests and the Ark, though. They're right here, remember? Walk around them as you go.** Lead everyone across to the other side of the river. Once on the other side, look back across and wave at the "priests."

We made it, and those priests are still bravely standing in the river. Let's read what happened next.



Read aloud Joshua 3:17-4:3

You heard what God said. Leaders, I need your help again. Let's say these cups are stones. Place stacks of cups in the center of the "river." The Israelite leaders gathered 12 stones, one for each tribe. I want you to go into the center of this Jordan River and gather one cup for each person in your Crew—Crew Guides, too. Come and get some cups, leaders, and give them to your Crew members. Pause.

## The Heart of the Matter

Let's leave the Israelites by the Jordan River for a few minutes and think about our own lives. Let's talk in our Crews.

- ❓ **When have you faced a big, scary situation in your life?** Share a quick example from your own life, then invite Crew Guides to go first in their Crews.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

The Jordan River was an obstacle, and getting across may have seemed like an impossible situation to overcome. But, as usual, God had a plan to help the Israelites. I have another question for you.

- ❓ **How did God help you overcome the situation you shared about? What did he do to help you?** Share an example from your own life, then invite Crews to talk again.
- Give Crews several minutes to discuss.

**God helps us be brave.** (*We're brave!*) Sometimes obstacles stop us in our tracks. But God gives us the courage we need to keep going, and God will make a way for us. He promised Joshua he'd go with him wherever he went—including a flooding river. And God will be with us, too. Let's thank God for helping us in the past.

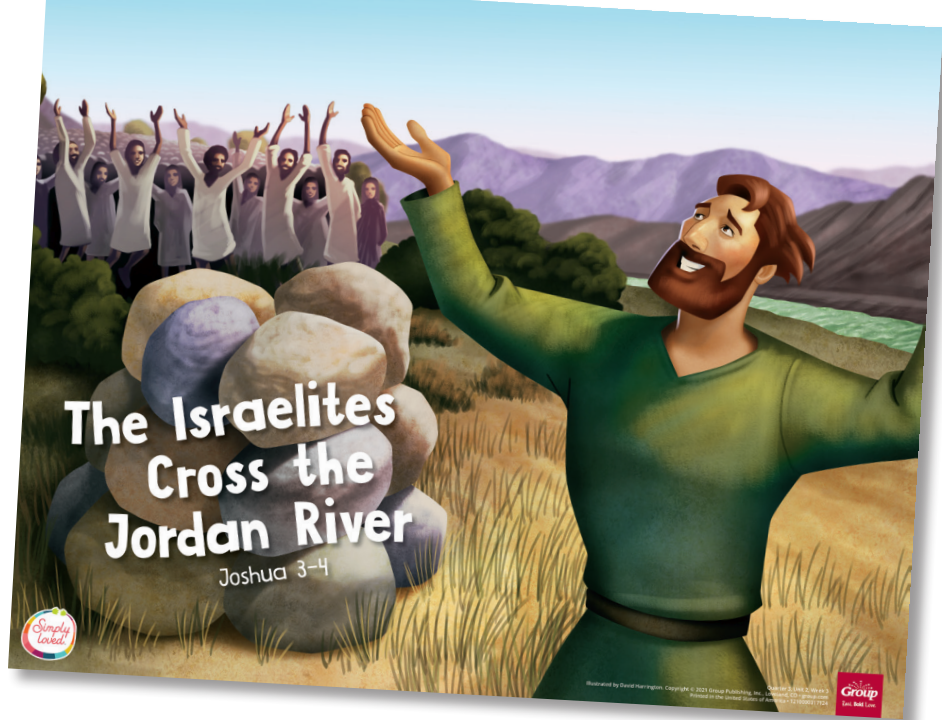
- Distribute markers to Crews.
- Have each person write on his or her cup and finish this sentence: "God, thank you for helping..."
- Have Crew members pray together, with everyone sharing what they wrote on their cups.
- End the prayer time by saying, **Dear God, even when we face big, scary things, you help us be brave and make a way for us. Thank you, God. Amen.**

Let's read what Joshua told the Israelites to do with *their* stones.



Read aloud Joshua 4:5-8.

Kids may not readily see how God helped their situations. If they don't have a quick answer, encourage Crew Guides to share their perspective and help kids discover how God may have been at work in that situation.



Show the Bible Story poster. **Joshua and the Israelites built a memorial to remember what God had done for them. Let's build a memorial with our stones, too.** If you have a large class, have each Crew make its own memorial. If your class is smaller, work together to make one big memorial.

**A memorial helps us remember something. In this case, it helped the Israelites remember all God had done for them. They'd gone through some scary stuff, but God was with them every step of the way.**

**Look!** Point at the imaginary priests and speak like a sports commentator. **The priests are carrying the Ark across the river. They're getting closer. And closer. And closer. They're almost to the riverbank. And...they're across!**

Pause and listen. **Do you hear that?** Have everyone cup their hands around their ears like they're listening. **It sounds like a trickle. No, more like a stream. Look "upstream" again. Whoa, now it's rushing water! The river water is flowing again! And here we are, safely on the other side, ready to see what God has for us next.** Have everyone high-five a few friends.

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities to support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.






# Apply-It Options

Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

## Explore More

**Supplies:** Bibles, paper (half sheet per person), pencils, large container of water, clear cups, tape

**Let's read what Joshua said to the Israelites after they built a memorial to thank God.**

 Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read Joshua 4:21-24 together.

- 🔍 **Let's think ahead to the future—like 60 years from now! Imagine you're a grandparent. What's something you'd want to tell your grandchild about God?**

Have kids write their thoughts on pieces of paper.

**Who knows if our papers will still be around 60 years from now? But just like the Israelites stayed dry crossing the Jordan River, we can see if our papers stay dry in water. Watch this!**

- Crumple your paper, and press it into the bottom of a clear cup. Use tape if needed to hold it in place.
- Turn the cup upside down, then slowly lower the cup into the container of water.
- Pull the cup straight out of the water, and touch the paper. It's dry!
- Invite kids to take turns doing the experiment, too.

You may have felt nervous pressing your cup into the water, like the Israelites might have been nervous taking that first step into the dried-up river. But **God helps us be brave.** (*We're brave!*) We can thank God and tell others how he's helped us.



## Game

- Have everyone stand on one side of the tape "river" from Bible Discovery.
- Depending on the size of your group, have one or more people be "It" in the center of the river.
- On "go," everyone will try to run back and forth across the river without getting tagged. It can tag runners only when they are in the river and not on either side.
- Runners can strategize, and they don't have to run right away, but they can't stand in one place for more than 10 seconds, or they become It, too.
- If tagged by It, runners switch places, and the runner becomes a new It.
- Play for several minutes. If you'd like to mix things up, have kids run, swim, gallop, or hop as they move back and forth across the river.

**God helps us be brave.** (*We're brave!*) **You really were brave as you darted and dodged your way back and forth across the river. We never know what obstacles we may face in our lives, but we do know that God is always with us. We thank him because he gives us the strength and courage we need to keep going.**



## Supplies

- Rockette Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Unit 2, Week 3) (1 per child)

# Friendship Finale



Rockette, our Bible Memory Buddy, can help us remember **God helps us be brave.** (We're brave!)

You'll each receive a Rockette sticker to help you remember to find courage from God throughout your week. You can bravely wear it home or save it for another day. Crew Guides will give each person a sticker like this.

- Have a willing child help you demonstrate how to receive a Rockette sticker.
- Crew Guides stand in the center of your tape "river" and call kids' names one by one. Kids walk to their Crew Guides to receive their stickers, then walk to the other side of the "river."
- As they give each child a Bible Memory Buddy sticker, Crew Guides say, "[Child's name], **God helps you be brave.**"
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has received a sticker.

Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience the love of Jesus through you!

The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language. The Hebrew name for Joshua is *Yeshua*. Guess what! Another way to translate "Yeshua" is *Jesus*! Both names mean "God saves."

Jesus really lived up to his name. Hundreds of years after Joshua led the Israelites, God sent his only Son, Jesus, to earth to be our rescuer. Jesus *does* save us—from sin! Jesus made a way for us to be close friends with God forever. Now that's something to thank God for!

I'd like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, please close your eyes, and imagine it's Thanksgiving! You're about to dig into a delicious meal. Can you picture it? Pause. But first, you stop to thank Jesus. Now listen while I read something about our friend Jesus.

- Read the first section of the Unit 2, Week 3 Take-It-Home Flyer.
- Now I'll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus' love in your Connect Crews *and* at home, too. Think of this as a practice time for talking about Jesus with your family at home.
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they discuss the "Talk Starter" question and then invite kids to share.
- Kids share prayer requests—things they'd like to tell Jesus—in their Connect Crews.
- Connect Crews pray together.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to "fly" home. 🌈

