

# The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Lesson 12

Joshua 3:1–4:24

## Bible Point:



Remember what God has done.

## Weaving Faith Into Life:






Kids will remember and thank God for the things he has done for them.

## Key Verse:



"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done" (1 Chronicles 16:8).



Lesson Sequence	What Students Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Resource Pack Supplies
1 Getting Started	<b>Remember When?</b> (about 5 min.) Tell about important dates and events in their lives.		
2 Bible Story Exploration	<b>Lights, Camera, Action!</b> (about 30 min.) Create a "movie" about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.	Bibles, scissors, supplies listed on "Into the Promised Land" poster	"Into the Promised Land" poster 
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	<b>Say It With Song</b> (about 15 min.) Learn the Key Verse song, write a prayer of thanks to God, and commit to a Daily Challenge.	Bibles, pens, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player	"Lyrics" poster, CD: "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 24) 
	<b>Picture This!</b> (about 10 min.) Make picture frames to remember what God has done.	Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, scissors, glue sticks, markers, 6x7-inch piece of cardboard for each child	CD: "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 24) 

# The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Parts of this story seem like a rerun of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea forty years earlier. Remember, however, that apart from Joshua and Caleb, all of the people crossing the Jordan River were no older than children when Israel crossed the Red Sea. This totally new experience must have reminded them of the stories their parents had told them about the miracle of crossing the Red Sea.

Notice that the Jordan River was not just a trickling stream—it was at “flood stage.” In the area of Jericho, it would have been 10 to 12 feet deep, and the current quite strong.

The Israelites built a stone memorial with the rocks taken from the center of the Jordan River. The memorial would remind people of the wonders God had done for the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land, and the 12 stones together would remind them of the 12 tribes joined together as one nation.

The last verse of today's passage, Joshua 4:24, tells us why God dried up the Jordan for the people to cross: “so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” God wanted his people to fear him—to give him the worship and service he deserved. Remembering what God had done would give them encouragement and faith when they faced the difficulties of conquering this new land.



## Devotion for Teachers

**The 1 Thing:** As we grow in relationship with Christ, we become more Christ-like. We can testify that we have been renewed and delivered from our different lives of the past.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Reread Joshua 4:24. Note the public display of power that God left as a reminder of his love and power. In times of darkness, it is often helpful to rest in the truth of what we have experienced in the past. Encounters with our Savior remind us that he is with us. Sharing these experiences with others can give hope to the hopeless and bring glory to the work God has done in you. Identify five people to whom you will testify of God's power in your life this week. After you share, watch how God's power in you affects the people you share with.

*For more about The 1 Thing, see page 4.*

# Understanding 3rd & 4th Graders for Teachers

Third- and fourth-graders want to feel independent. They need to know they can accomplish goals on their own, with little help from adults. Letting them create today's Bible story will feed that need and will give kids more of an investment in the Bible truths they learn today. Consequently, they'll remember the story of how God helped the Israelites cross the Jordan River—and remembering what God has done is the whole point!

## Easy Prep for Teachers

### Lights, Camera, Action!

- Remove the "Into the Promised Land" poster from the Resource Pack.
- Cut along the lines to divide the poster into four sections.
- Gather together the supplies each section calls for.

Get bonus teacher tips and ideas at [www.faithweaver.com](http://www.faithweaver.com).



## 1 Getting Started

### Remember When?

As children arrive, ask them to share how they followed through on their Daily Challenges last week. Then gather kids in a circle.

**Say** Today's Bible story is about an important event that happened to the Israelites. But before we get to the story, let's talk about some important events that have happened to us!

Have kids form pairs. Explain that you'll call out a series of questions. After each question, have partners tell each other their answers. Then invite volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class. Ask kids questions such as the following:

- Ask**
- **What's an important date in your life? Why?** (My birthday, because I was born; Thanksgiving, because my whole family is together!)
  - **Where did you go on your favorite vacation?** (I went to Disneyland; I went to the beach.)
  - **What's the best birthday party you've ever had?** (My fifth birthday; my first birthday.)
  - **Who was your favorite teacher? Why?** (Ms. Johnson, because she was really nice.)
  - **What's the best Christmas present you've ever received?** (My first bike; my new puppy.)
  - **Why do you remember certain events from your past?** (Because they were fun; because they were special.)

**Say** We remember events that are important to us—events that affect our lives in some way. And when an important event happens, people tell one another about it, just as you told your partners in this activity. As I said, today's Bible story is about

### Extra Impact

Feel free to add supplies for each crew. For example, you could supply robes and sandals for the costume crew, animal noise boxes for the sound effects crew, sheets on which to paint for the set design crew, and "dressing rooms" for the stars of the movie.

Have face paint available for the costume crew. Also be sure to bring in face cleanser to remove the paint afterward.



an important event that happened to the nation of Israel. Our Bible Point for today tells us that we should remember what God has done.



## 2

## Bible Story Exploration

### Lights, Camera, Action!

**Say**

Today's Bible story comes from the third and fourth chapters of the book of Joshua.

Open your Bible to Joshua 3:1–4:24, and show kids the passage.

• **Who can tell me what was going on with Joshua and the Israelites in last week's lesson?**

**Ask**

Let volunteers respond.

**Say**

Last week we learned that Joshua had sent spies into Jericho before leading the Israelites into the land God had promised them. In today's story, the big day had arrived. It was finally time to enter the Promised Land! But there was one small problem. Between the Israelites and the Promised Land ran the Jordan River—and the Jordan River was at flood stage.

**Ask**

• **How many of you have ever seen a movie or video that showed the Israelites crossing the Red Sea?**

**Say**

Well, today we'll make a movie about the crossing of the Jordan River. Here's what we'll do.

Have kids form four groups, and explain that each group will have a role in the movie. Assign each group one of the following roles:

**Set Design:** This group will need a Bible, newsprint, colored markers (including several blue markers), brown and blue construction paper, a medium-size cardboard box, and tape.

**Actors:** This group will need a Bible; paper; pencils; and kids to play the parts of Joshua, the priests, and the Israelites.

**Sound Effects:** This group will need a Bible, wooden blocks, jingle bells, empty 2-liter bottles with caps, and water.

**Costumes:** This group will need a Bible, paper grocery bags, scissors, colored markers, old pillowcases, newsprint, and clear packing tape.

Have each group go to a separate corner of the room to prepare for its role.

Give each group a Bible. Then distribute to each group its set of supplies and the instructions from the poster that pertain to the group's role. (The instructions and pictures on the poster are there to guide crews. But don't be surprised if crews come up with their own ideas for the movie. Activities that allow kids room for expression and creativity lead to learning that lasts!) Explain that kids will have about 20 minutes to follow the instructions on the poster for their part in the movie. As kids work, circulate around the room to offer help as needed. Encourage kids to refer often to both the Bible and the poster instructions.

### Tips from the Trenches

If you have a small class, simplify some of the things kids do, such as having less elaborate costumes, or have all of the kids participate in each crew and do the movie in stages.

After 20 minutes (or sooner if kids seem ready) have groups assemble to begin the movie. Have the set designers put their props in place, have the costume crew dress the actors, have the cast of characters get into position, and have the sound effects crew position themselves just “offstage” for the performance.

Explain that you’ll slowly read aloud the Bible story. As you read, crews will act out their parts. The acting crew and sound effects crew will be involved continuously. The set design crew will move the river when the story calls for it, with the assistance of the costume crew.

When everyone is ready, slowly read aloud Joshua 3:14-17; Joshua 4:1-3; and Joshua 4:15-17. Pause during the story to allow kids to perform their roles. After the movie, lead the class in applause as each crew takes a bow. Then have kids answer the following questions in their crews. After each question, ask crews to share their answers with the rest of the class.

### Ask

- **Do you think you’ll remember this Bible story? Explain.** (Yes, because I won’t forget the movie we made; yes, because acting it out helps me remember.)
- **Why do you think God told Joshua to have the 12 tribes build a monument after they crossed the river?** (To remember what God did for them; to remind them to thank God.)
- **Why do you suppose God wanted people to remember what happened in this story?** (Because he helped them; because it was a miracle; so they could thank him for helping them.)
- **Why should we remember what God has done?** (Because it makes God happy; so we can tell others what God has done for us.)

### Say

**In this story, God made it clear that he wanted people to remember what he had done for the Israelites when he helped them cross into the Promised Land. Without his help, they would never have been able to get across that flooded river. And people *do* remember, because here we are reading about it thousands of years later! God is so awesome!**

**Our Bible Point tells us to remember what God has done. God wants us to remember the things he has done because he wants us to really know him. He loves us and wants a relationship with us. In fact, God wants us to have a relationship with him so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, to live on earth and die for our sins so we can live forever with Jesus and God in heaven.**



### Extra Impact

Bring in a video camera to catch all the action. You and your kids will have a wonderful time watching the movie together, and you could even make copies for parents. You might also consider showing the movie to other classes or to the congregation. Show off the fun (and learning!) your class is experiencing!



Find out how making your own song of thankfulness can teach you more about today’s Key Verse! See the activity on page 406 in your *Hands-On Bible!*

## 3 Weaving Faith Into Life

### Say It With Song

Have someone in each group read aloud 1 Chronicles 16:8. Then lead the class in saying the verse with you: **“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done” (1 Chronicles 16:8).** Again have kids answer the following questions in their groups. After each question, ask volunteers to share their answers with the rest of the class.



**Ask** • According to this verse, what things should we do in response to God? (We should thank God; we should tell others about the things he has done.)

**Say** God constantly does amazing things for his people. We should remember what God has done so we can thank him and tell others about him. Let's do that right now with a Key Verse song.

Pull out the CD from your Resource Pack. Cue your CD to "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8), and play the song through once or twice until kids are familiar with the tune and words. Then ask kids to sing along with the CD, referring to the "Lyrics" poster if necessary.



After the song, gather kids in a circle. Distribute pens and today's Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have kids turn to the "What God Has Done" activity.

**Say** Inside the first stone, write a prayer to God to thank him for what he has done.

Give kids a few minutes to write. When everyone has finished writing, ask kids to turn to someone sitting near them and share what they've written. Then ask a few volunteers to share their prayers with the rest of the class.

**Say** Let's each choose a way we'll remember and thank God for the things he's done for us.

- At dinnertime, lead your family members in a prayer and have everyone at the table say one thing God has done for them that they're thankful for.
- Keep a list of things God does for you each day.
- Tell a friend about something God has done for you.

**Say** Now, inside the second stone, circle which Daily Challenge you chose.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same!

**Say** Before we go, let's make something to help us remember today's Bible story and the wonderful things God has done.

### Picture This!

**Say** Sometimes when people want to remember a special time, they put a picture of that time in a picture frame. We're going to make picture frames to remind us of today's Bible story.

Set out scissors, glue sticks, and markers.

Have kids turn to the "Picture This!" activity on today's Bible Truth Sleuth page. Give each child a piece of heavy card stock or cardboard that is the same size as the picture frame on the Bible Truth Sleuth. These will serve as the backs for the picture frames. Then have kids each cut out the frame pictured there. Demonstrate how to carefully glue the edges of the frame to the cardboard backing on all sides



except the top edge. Be sure kids leave the top edge open so they can slide a photograph between the frame and backing. Have them draw pictures of 12 stones to represent the 12 stones the Israelites used in their monument. Cue your CD to "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8), and play it while kids work.



**Track 24**

When everyone has finished making a picture frame, have kids form pairs. Have kids display their frames to their partners. Then have partners take turns naming things they remember that God has done in their lives. For example, kids might say they remember when God healed someone who was sick, gave them loving families, or provided food.

When kids have finished talking, have them form a large circle.

**Say** **You used the stones on your frames to remind you of what God has done, just as the Israelites in our story used stones to remind them what God did for them.**

Close with a circle prayer in which kids each name one thing they remember that God has done for them. Encourage kids to insert pictures in their frames when they get home. Tell them to choose pictures that will help them remember things God has done for them. For example, kids could choose pictures of family members or good friends who God has placed in their lives. Then tell kids each to show their pictures to someone else and use the pictures to explain today's Bible story. Remind them that in doing so, they'll be doing what the Key Verse says: "Make known among the nations what he has done."

### **Extra Impact**

As the glue dries, let kids each choose 12 craft stones. Tell kids they can glue the stones to the fronts of their frames in any design they choose. Supply glitter, markers, and ribbons for kids to use to decorate their frames, or supply colorful tape for them to use as trim to bind the edges together.

Make a frame yourself, and take a picture of your class with an instant-print camera. Insert the picture in your frame, and with a note signed by your kids, send it to your church's pastor. On the note, write today's Key Verse and a few words of encouragement about what God is doing in your kids' lives.

