

The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24



Bible Point:



Remember to thank God.

Weaving Faith Into Life:





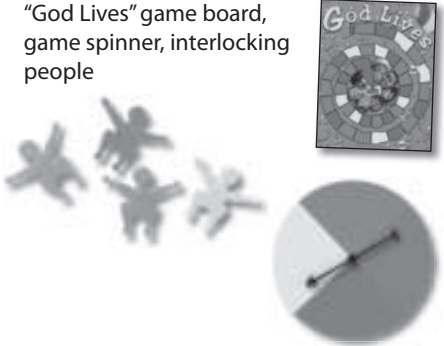
Children will thank God for all the things he has given them.

Key Verse:



God's mighty hand cares for you (adapted from 1 Peter 5:6-7).

Lesson Sequence	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Teacher Pack Supplies
1 Getting Started <i>about 10 min.</i>	Welcoming Song Sing or listen to praises for God.	CD player	CD: "Welcome to God's House" (track 18) 
2 FaithWeaver Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	Hand of God Do an activity to consider how big and mighty God's hands are.	Bible, pair of adult gloves	
3 Bible Story Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	Theo's News Find out what ears of corn have to do with the Bible story.	CD player, Story Surprise Box, Theo puppet, ears of corn or candy corn	CD: "Here, Theo" (track 3) 
	Story Time Pretend to cross the Jordan River and thank God.	Bible, 10 feet of blue bulletin board paper	

Lesson Sequence	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Teacher Pack Supplies
<p>4 Weaving Faith Into Life <i>about 20 min.</i></p>	<p>Center 1: Crossing the River Using stamp pads, make rocks and an altar to thank God.</p>	<p>My Bible Playground (1 per child), stamp pads</p>	
	<p>Center 2: Fish From the River Snacks Thank God as they eat crackers.</p>	<p>Fish crackers, paper towels</p>	
	<p>Center 3: Celebrate God's Blessings Play a game of thanks.</p>		<p>"God Lives" game board, game spinner, interlocking people</p> 
	<p>Center 4: The Waters Part Make a craft to re-create the parting of the Jordan River.</p>	<p>Blue construction paper (1 sheet per child), scissors, brown construction paper (1 sheet per child), fish-shaped crackers, glue</p>	
<p>5 Lasting Impressions <i>about 5 min.</i></p>	<p>Be a FaithWeaver Accept a challenge to remember to thank God during the week.</p>		
	<p>Thank You Prayer Act out a rhyming prayer.</p>		

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 40 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 Ages 5 & 6 for Teachers

“Thank you” is an important tool that 5- and 6-year-olds have begun to use and understand. Having a thankful heart is something taught through your example and the example of significant people in your children’s lives. Don’t be afraid to verbally thank God for even small things throughout your class time. Your children will soon begin to imitate your example and will begin thanking God on their own.

Easy Prep for Teachers

Music—Place the *FaithWeaver Pre-K & K/Ages 5 & 6, Fall 2006* CD in your CD player.

Hand of God—Bookmark 1 Peter 5:6-7 in your Bible.

Theo’s News—Place a couple of decorative ears of corn (or several pieces of candy corn) inside your Story Surprise Box, and hide the box where it’s easily accessible.

Story Time

- Cut two 5-foot-long pieces of blue bulletin board paper. Working from the short end, fold each paper back about 1½ feet and form a crease.
- Lay the papers on the floor with the folded parts down and the two folds touching. The resulting long strip will be used for a “river.”
- Bookmark Joshua 3:1–4:24 in your Bible.

Crossing the River—Remove the Lesson 12 pages from My Bible Playground.

The Waters Part—Cut one piece of blue construction paper per child in half lengthwise.

Web Help: For more ideas on using FaithWeaver with your class, see the bonus teacher tips at www.faithweaver.com.



Extra Impact

Tape the “Things We Need” poster (from the Teacher Pack) to a wall at the children’s eye level. Have small beanbags or soft foam balls available for kids to toss at the pictures.

As the children arrive, have them line up to take turns tossing beanbags at the poster. As a beanbag hits one of the pictures, have kids say, “Thank you, God, for [the item the beanbag hit].”

1 Getting Started

Welcoming Song

As the children arrive, greet each child and welcome him or her with a smile. Remind children of the Daily Challenges from last week and ask them to share with you how they completed their Daily Challenges. When it’s time to begin, use your classroom signal to gather the children in a circle. (See page 9 for more about classroom signals.)

Begin the CD, and lead the kids in singing “Welcome to God’s House” to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot.” Encourage the kids to join you in repeating the verses.



Track 18

Welcome to God’s house.

Please come and play.

Let’s learn about God and how to pray.

Welcome to God’s house.

Please come and play.

Let’s all have a super day!



2 FaithWeaver Key Verse Activity

Hand of God

Have the children form a circle and sit down. Open your Bible to 1 Peter 5:6-7, and show the children the words.



Say Our Key Verse from the Bible says, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” This means that God cares for you. Let’s say the Key Verse together. Lead the children in repeating the adapted Key Verse with you: **God’s mighty hand cares for you.**

We can only guess or imagine just how big and mighty God’s hands are. Let’s do an activity to help us think about God’s mighty hands.

Have one child put on the pair of adult gloves. Have the other children form a single-file line in front of the gloved person. Let each child shake the gloved person’s hand. The gloved person should say the Key Verse to each person as he or she passes by.

If you have time, repeat the activity until everyone has had a chance to wear the gloves.

- Ask**
- **How big do you think God’s hands are?** Encourage kids to use hand motions to show you.
 - **How does God use his mighty hands to care for us?** (He keeps us safe from things we’re scared of; he helps us makes friends; he gives us moms and dads.)
 - **Who can you tell about God’s mighty hands?** (My dad; my grandpa; my friends.)

Say When we remember that God’s mighty hand cares for us, we should remember to thank God for taking care of us.

3 Bible Story Exploration

Theo’s News



Say Friends, it’s time for Theo’s News!

Begin “Here, Theo” on the CD. When the CD segment ends, bring out the Story Surprise Box, and put the Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.



Track 3

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about our Bible story.

Theo: I hid it in the Story Surprise Box.

Teacher: Let's look inside to see what Theo dug up for us today.

(Choose a child to open the Story Surprise Box, and have the kids pass the ears of corn [or candy corn] around the circle so the rest of the class can see them up close. Give the children time to guess what the Bible story might be about.)

Teacher: At this time of year, we often decorate with dried corn and other food items as a symbol of a good harvest and to show that we are thankful for the food we have to eat. What are some things that you are thankful for?

(Pause for kids to answer your question.)

Teacher: Theo, why did you hide this corn in the Story Surprise Box?

Theo: I like to eat corn at Thanksgiving, so corn reminds me to give thanks for everything that God has given me. In our Bible story today, we'll hear about some people who had a lot to give thanks for.

Teacher: Let's find out what they were thankful for!

Theo: Have fun, boys and girls!

Teacher: Let's say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.

Story Time

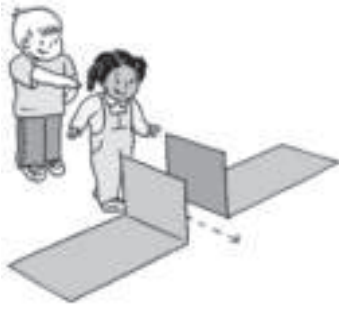
Gather the children in an area away from the river. Open your Bible to Joshua 3:1–4:24 and show the children the words.

Say **We're going to pretend we're traveling with Joshua today. I'll bet the Israelites remembered to give thanks to God throughout their journey. In our story today, let's see how many things the Israelites could have thanked God for. Our story starts early in the morning.** Have the children lie down and pretend to be sleeping. **Wake up, wake up! We should give thanks for the beautiful day.** Have the children suggest things to be thankful for such as a restful night, the warmth of the sun, the trees and flowers, or the birds in the sky.

Let's get dressed for the day and have some breakfast. Encourage the children to pretend to get dressed and eat breakfast. Have the kids

Tips from the Trenches

To keep your "river" in place, tape the paper to the floor, leaving the folded ends loose.



suggest things to give thanks for such as eyes to see, ears to hear, noses to smell, fingers to touch, mouths to taste, or food to eat.

Let's begin our journey. Find a friend to hug, then hold his or her hand during our long journey. On our way, we can thank God for friends and family. Walk a few steps, then stop and allow each child to give thanks for the person whose hand he or she is holding. **We have finally arrived in the city of Jordan. We should rest now.** Have the children lie down and pretend to sleep.

We've been here several days, and now we must cross the river. Do not be afraid, because God will be with us. Stand up and lead the children toward the river made of bulletin board paper. **Look, there's so much water in the Jordan River. We can't cross this river alone. God will make it possible for us to cross. Look what God did!** Fold the edges up at right angles and pull the papers apart to reveal the "dry land" underneath. **God gave us dry ground to walk on! Come on, friends.** Have all the children walk across the river on the dry land. **God has brought us safely across the river. We must remember to thank God for helping us across the river.** Have all the children kneel, bow their heads, and fold their hands in prayer. **Thank you, God, for this miracle. Thank you for parting the water of the Jordan River so that we might cross safely. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Ask

- **How did God help the Israelites in our story today?** (He helped the Israelites cross the river; God gave them food; he helped them not be afraid.)
- **How do you think the Israelites felt when God moved the water so that they could cross safely?** (Happy; surprised; amazed.)
- **What can you thank God for?** (My family; friends; my toys.)



Say

There are so many things that God does for us each and every day. His mighty hand cares for us. We need to remember to thank God. When Jesus was here on earth, he prayed and thanked God continually. We can remember to thank God when we know Jesus and live like he did.

4 Weaving Faith Into Life

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today's Bible lesson. Gather the supplies and put them out of sight until you need them. Allow the children to choose which center they'd like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible story by asking them the questions included with each center. (See pages 25, 36, 47, and 59 for ways to organize the centers.)

Center 1: Crossing the River

Distribute the My Bible Playground student pages, and have kids write their names on their papers. Give kids stamp pads with washable ink, and show them how to make

fingerprint “rocks” in the Jordan River. Then have kids make an “altar” of 12 fingerprint rocks next to the river. Have children each tell one thing they are thankful for.

- Ask**
- **Why did the Israelites need help crossing the Jordan River?** (The river was full; they didn’t have a boat; there wasn’t a bridge.)
 - **If you were an Israelite, what would you tell God when you got to the other side of the river?** (Thank you; I love you; you’re great.)
 - **What can you thank God for?** (For helping me at school; for giving me toys; for church.)

Say **God cares for us, just as he cared for the Israelites. We don’t have to build altars to thank God; we can just speak to God and thank him right away. Let’s remember to thank God often during the day.**



Center 2: Fish From the River Snacks

Have children wash their hands before this activity, then tell children to sit on the floor. Set fish-shaped crackers nearby, and have paper towels or napkins available for kids to put their crackers on.

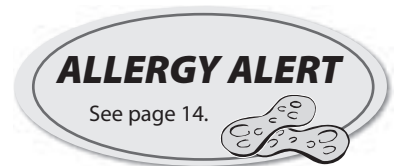
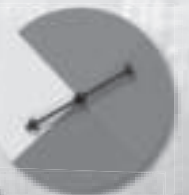
- Ask**
- **What are some things the Israelites might have seen as they walked through the river?** When someone suggests fish, give each child a handful of fish crackers.
 - **How do you think the Israelites felt seeing all that water around them as they crossed the river?** (Scared; surprised; happy.)
 - **What would you thank God for if you were an Israelite crossing the river?** (Keeping me safe; that I was dry; that I was going to a new home.)

Say **We have lots of things we can thank God for today just like the Israelites did. One thing we can thank God for is our crackers. Let’s all think of one other thing we are thankful for and then thank God.** Have the children each thank God for one thing. Then close the prayer by thanking God for the snacks that God provided for the children.

Group the children in pairs. As children eat each cracker, have kids tell their partners something they are thankful for.

Center 3: Celebrate God’s Blessings

Place the “God Lives” game board, game spinner, and interlocking people (from the Teacher Pack) on a table. (The game board is on the reverse side of the “Things We Need” poster.) Have children take turns flicking the spinner and moving their people along the path to the end. As they make each move, tell kids to thank God for something that is the same color as the color shown on the spinner. (For example, kids might say, “Thank you, God, for the yellow sun.”) The game ends when all the children’s toy figures have completed their mission—to remember to thank God for all things. Have kids celebrate the end of the game by shouting, “Thank you, God!” and giving high fives to one another.



Ask • **What are some things you're thankful for?** (My house; my dog; my friends.)

• **Who else could you remind this week to give thanks to God?** (My brother; my friends; my aunt.)



Say **God has given us many blessings. We need to remember to thank God for those blessings.**



Center 4: The Waters Part

Say **In our Bible story we learned that God helped the Israelites cross the Jordan River by parting the waters of the river. The people were able to walk across dry ground because God moved the waters of the river away. The Israelites remembered to thank God for this special miracle. We need to remember to thank God, too, especially at Thanksgiving time. Let's do a craft to remind us of our story and to remind us to thank God.**



Give each child a sheet of brown construction paper and two pieces of blue construction paper that you cut before class. Also give each child a handful of fish-shaped crackers. Help children fold each piece of cut paper lengthwise and then glue half of the folded blue construction paper down the edge of the brown paper. The unglued edges of blue paper will meet in the middle when laid flat.

Let the children glue crackers on the blue papers. Review the story. When you get to the part about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River, have the children fold up the unglued edges of the blue paper so they "stand up" like walls of water.

Ask • **What did the Israelites do to show their thanks to God?** (They talked to God; they made an altar.)

• **What are you thankful for?** (My family; my bike; food.)

• **How can you show your thankfulness to God?** (Pray; sing a song; tell everyone what God has done.)

Encourage children to find a partner. Have them share with their partners the things they're thankful for at this special time of year. Encourage them to pray together as partners, thanking God for their blessings.

5 Lasting Impressions

Be a FaithWeaver

After the children have cleaned up their centers, bring the class back to the circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about the Bible story.

Use this time not only to review the lesson but also to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose one of the ideas you will provide for applying today's lesson to their daily lives. Use this challenge for both encouragement and accountability in your children's growing relationships with Jesus.



Say Today we learned that we need to **remember to thank God**. I'd like each of you to choose a way you can thank God this week.

Give kids these three ideas to choose from:

- Cut out a heart and put it in your pocket. Every time you take it out, thank God for loving you and taking care of you.
- Help your mom or dad wash your toys. As you do, thank God for each toy he has given you.
- Say a prayer with your family when you sit down for Thanksgiving dinner. Thank God for giving you family, food, and a home.

Allow the kids to either choose from these three ideas or take a minute to think of a few new ideas together. Then have the kids turn to a partner nearby and tell the partner which idea they've chosen. Make sure you choose an idea as well, and tell a partner. Your commitment will inspire your students and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as theirs!

Say When we meet again next week, I will ask you how you used your idea to remember to thank God!

Thank You Prayer

Say this prayer with your children, and have them act out the motions as they talk to God.

Dear God,

Thank you for the food I eat. (*Pretend to eat.*)

Thank you for a place to sleep. (*Fold hands together and rest head on hands with eyes closed.*)

Thank you for my family. (*Place arms across chest as if hugging.*)

Thank you, God, for making me. (*Tap chest twice.*)

In Jesus' name, amen.

At the end of class, remind the children to take home the My Bible Playground student pages. (Ideas for designing a take-home center are on page 16.)