

LESSON 2

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Make a Way Through Anything

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 3–4

GOD'S BIG STORY: After 40 years in the wilderness, God leads a new generation of His people across the Jordan River and into the promised land, showing that He can make a way through anything.

WORD OF WONDER: God keeps His promises forever. —from 1 Chronicles 16:15

Object Lesson: Exploring Stones

Activity: Part the Water

Worship

God's Big Story

Snack

Word of Wonder

Prayer and Blessing

Activity: Follow Me

Object Lesson: Exploring Stones

SUPPLIES: various shapes and sizes of rocks and stones, tray or bin

Before kids arrive, gather as many different shapes and sizes of rocks and stones as you can find and put them on a tray or in a bin. Make sure the rocks are clean and big enough to not be a choking hazard.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Hi, I'm so glad you're here! Today we're going to learn a story that has a pile of stones in it. The stones were a special reminder to God's people, the Israelites. Would you like to look at, feel, and hold these rocks and stones?

Invite kids to come up to the tray to hold and play with the rocks and stones. Encourage them to stack the stones in one big pile, encouraging all the kids to participate in putting a stone in the pile.

In God's big story we're going to hear today, the Israelites made a pile of stones just like this to remind them of something. We're going to find out more soon.

Activity: Part the Water

SUPPLIES: blue paper, construction paper, or tissue paper; video of river with rushing water (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Rushing Water Sound Effect (optional)

Ahead of time, crumple up sheets of blue paper and put them in a line to make a pretend river. During this activity, play the Rushing Water Sound Effect as background noise. If you have a video of a river with rushing water, you could also show that to the kids.

In our story today, we'll hear about God parting the water in a river so the Israelites could walk through it. We'll learn how God made a way for His people even when it seemed impossible. Let's take turns pushing the water out of the way and going through the pretend river, like the Israelites did.

Demonstrate pushing the paper out of the way and running through the river. Then let kids take turns doing it, making sure to have a leader put the paper back after each kid has a turn. (You may want to leave the "river" set up for the God's Big Story section.)

We'll learn all about what God did in today's story. Our Wonder Truth today is: GOD CAN MAKE A WAY THROUGH ANYTHING.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—Point up.

CAN MAKE—Spread your arms out in front of you.

A WAY—Move your hands out in front and down, like you're pointing to a path in front of you.

THROUGH ANYTHING—Spread your arms out in front of you, pointing toward everything around you.

Worship

Today we'll learn about how God prepares the way for us and leads us. Let's sing together and thank Him!

Play songs from the Little Learners Playlist and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, blue blanket or disposable tablecloth, stones, gray paper (optional), scissors (prep only, optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Ahead of time, set out a blue blanket or disposable tablecloth cover on the ground to be a pretend river. Set some stones on the pretend water. If you don't have stones, you could cut gray paper to make stones.

Our God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about a person named Joshua. Can you say, "Joshua"? Pause to allow the kids to respond. We'll learn how he trusted God and led the Israelites, God's people. Good! Let's find out from the Bible how God helped Joshua and the Israelites.

Show the kids the God's Big Story Video, read the story from the Bible, or use the script provided. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give the kids a visual depiction of the story.

Gather all the kids to sit on one side of the pretend river.

The Israelites were God's special people. He told them He had a special land for them to live in. They had a lot of hard things they had to go through to get to it. They had a very long journey in the wilderness, but God was always with them. God chose Joshua to be their leader. After lots of years of wandering, the Israelites were almost to the special land. They were so close! Put your hand over your eyes and squint as if you're looking at something in the distance and encourage kids to mimic you.

Can you see it, if you look really hard? Point across the pretend river. **They were probably very excited that they were getting closer to the special land. But on the way, they came to a big, flowing river. How would they get across the big river? It didn't have bridges. It was too big to jump across, too deep and wide for all the people to swim across, and it would take too long to go around. It seemed impossible!** Put your hands on your hips, looking defeated and sad. Encourage kids to mimic you.

But God had a plan to make a way. God made the water stop flowing so the Israelites could walk across on dry land! God told the people what to do, and they did what God said. Some of God's people held a special box called the ark of the covenant and carried it into the water. When they did, the water stopped flowing, and there was dry ground for them to walk on! All the people walked across. Push aside the paper and stand in the middle of the river. Invite the kids to walk with you, through the "dry" part of the river. Have kids sit on the other side of the river for the rest of the story. Leave the stones or gray papers on the floor.

Snack

Instruct kids to sit in the floor. Pass out snacks and say a prayer together.

Invite kids to repeat after you:

Dear God. kids repeat

You know me, love me, and lead me too. kids repeat

Please help me follow You. kids repeat

Thank you for snacks so yummy. kids repeat

That fill my happy tummy! kids repeat

Amen

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

WORD OF WONDER

God keeps His promises forever.

—from 1 Chronicles 16:15

Our Word of Wonder for the Problems and Promises series is from 1 Chronicles 16:15: “God keeps His promises forever.”

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD**—Point up.
- **KEEPS**—Spread your right hand out before you from left to right.
- **HIS PROMISES**—Place an index finger on your lips. Move your hand downward and open your palm.
- **FOREVER**—Draw large circles in the air with your index finger.
- **FROM 1 CHRONICLES 16:15**—Open your hands in front of you, like opening a book.

Prayer and Blessing

Let’s pray and talk to God and thank Him for how He guides us and how He keeps His promises.

God, thank You for Your promise to always be with us and to make a way for us even when we go through hard times. Help us follow Your Holy Spirit and trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Just as God was with the Israelites as they crossed the Jordan River, He is with you through every challenge you face. May you always remember that He is the God who can make a way through anything.

Activity: Follow Me

SUPPLIES: various small toys

Ahead of time, set out various toys and “obstacles” all over a large area in your room, leaving space for kids to walk around the toys to get from one side of the room to the other.

Have kids line up and take turns leading the line through the obstacles of toys to get from one side of the room to the other. **Be careful not to step on any toys! Make sure to follow the leader as the leader leads everyone around the toys safely to the other side of the room.** Give all the kids a chance to be the leader.

The Israelites had a leader named Joshua, and they also had God as their leader. God led them through some scary things and took care of them. They followed God and trusted Him to help them get to the land He promised them for a home. We can trust and follow God too. He is always there for us and will make a way for us to get through anything that we face.