

Session 4

Crossing the Jordan

Children experience that God helps us through difficult times

Scripture: Joshua 3, Psalm 114

Supplies:

- Ark: take a large cardboard box. Make holes for broomsticks at the top of the box. Put two broomsticks through the holes so the box can hang from it. You can put material over the box that only the 4 ends of the broomsticks are sticking out.
- If you have biblical clothes or material, you can dress up the characters.
- A big piece of blue plastic about 1m x 5m (can be bought at a hardware shop)
- Paper plates
- Two ropes



Welcome

Walk-through-the-Jordan game

Take about 8 paper plates and 2 ropes. Put the ropes on the floor to make the two sides of the river. Glue the paper plates between the ropes so that they look like stones in the river. It must not be difficult or too easy for the children to cross. You can also do this at the entrance of the room so that children have to walk through the Jordan to get inside.

Carry each other game

Make groups of 3. Let two stand across from each other and hold hands. Let the third person sit on their hands. Take them back to the “river” with the “stones” and carry each other across. Take turns to carry each other.

Purify yourself game

Every time the leader says: “Purify yourself!” the children jump up and shake themselves.

Every time the leader says: “Set up camp!” the children lie down. See if you can confuse the children by starting slowly and then going faster. Those who get it wrong are out. You could also repeat the same instruction to check that they are really listening.



Worship

Settle down ritual: Play the sound clip (download it free from our website and play on a phone.)

Loud sounds

“Look left and look right, but don’ t be scared!” (*Show with movements*)

Thunder etc.

“Look up, look down, and don’ t be afraid.” (*Show with movements*)

Music

“In front and behind you, above and below you, around you and inside you is God, the everlasting Lord.” (*Turn around with your arms spread out.*)



Word

Perform the following play with the children.

You need: Joshua, 4 priests, 2 important men, and the rest of the children can be the Israelites.

(Act the part as you tell the story. Put the blue plastic in the middle of the room.)

Joshua and the Israelites had to go through the River Jordan to get to the Promised Land that God gave them.

They stayed in Shittim near the river. *(Let everyone lie down and pretend to be sleeping.)*

They woke early one morning, took down their camp and walked to the Jordan.

(Let them walk to the plastic. The "priests" now pick up the "ark" and walk in the middle of the group, because they're protecting the ark.) When they got there, they saw that the Jordan was very full. The water almost spilled over the banks. It was harvest season and during that time, the Jordan was always in flood.

When they got to the river, the important men went ahead to see where they could set up camp. *(The two important men look for a good spot.)*

They stayed there for three days. *(Let everyone lie down by the river again.)* Joshua and the men spoke for a while and made plans. They were looking for a place to cross the river. *(Let Joshua and the two important men walk up and down the river.)* They were very scared because the current was strong. God spoke to Joshua and told him that the priests must walk in front with the ark on their shoulders. *(Let Joshua stand in one place and look up.)*

The ark was very special to them because it was where the Ten Commandments were kept. They wanted to protect the ark, as it was proof that God would be with them. However, God promised Joshua that He would be with them and would keep them and the ark safe. He also said that the Jordan would dry up and that they would walk through it.

Joshua called the people together and told them to purify themselves because the next morning they would experience many wonders; things they had never seen before. *(Let everyone get up and shake their clothes.)*

When the new day dawned, the priests carried the ark on their shoulders. The people stayed far behind the ark. They weren't allowed to come close. *(Let the children stay back.)* Then the priests came to the river. They were afraid of the strong current. *(The 4 priests with the ark get stuck by the river.)* They waited for God to dry up the river, but God told Joshua that the priests' feet must touch the water and they must trust Him. *(The 2 priests in front put their feet carefully in the "river".)* When the priests carefully wet their feet, the river pulled back and they could walk through the river. *(One of the grown-ups rolls the "river" from one side up to the priests' feet. Put a few paper plates down for them to walk on.)* The river just stayed where it was. Thereafter all the Israelites walked through the river. This is how they reached the promised land Canaan. *(Everyone walks through.)*

When everyone was through, the water began flowing again. *(Roll the river down again. Let everyone turn around and applaud. Sing a song to honour God.)*

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder if the priests were afraid that the water would sweep them away.
2. I wonder if you have ever needed to do something that seemed too difficult.
3. I wonder if you have experienced how God helped you to do something that seemed impossible.



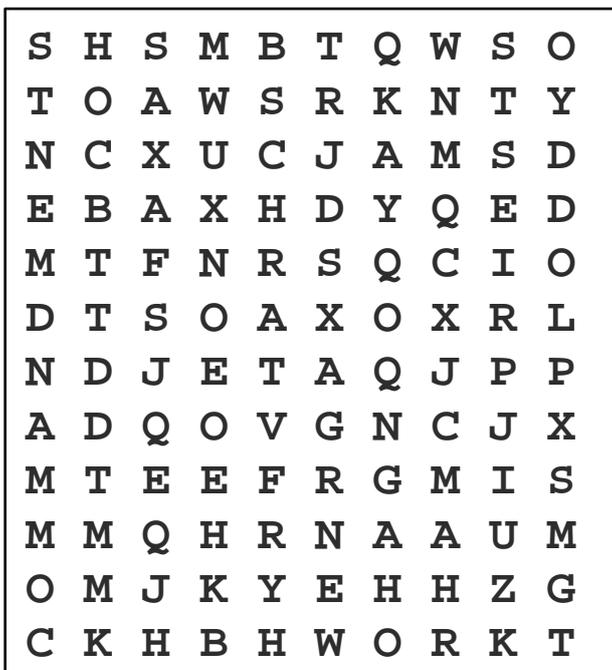
Working and Playing

- Hand out the word search. Children need to find the words going up, down, across or diagonal.
- Colour the picture of the priests carrying the ark.
- Give each child a matchbox with toothpicks to build the ark. Decorate it.
- Let the children write things they struggle with on the paper plates. Place it like stones in the river and walk over them.



Closing prayer to end the session

Joshua 1:9 "Be strong, be courageous. Don't be afraid, don't be scared, because I, the Lord, am with you wherever you go."



- 1) Which river did the Israelites have to cross?
- 2) Who was their leader?
- 3) The river was in flood because it was the _____ season.
- 4) Who had to carry the ark?
- 5) The ten _____ were inside the ark.
- 6) Which body part of the priests had to touch the water?
- 7) What was the new country's name?

The ark of the covenant:

Copy the template onto cardboard. Cut on the border lines and fold the dotted lines. Cut the angels out and fold them on their dotted lines. Each angel's base folds outwards to stick them on top of the ark.



