

# Joshua Leads

---

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1:9

OPTIONAL VIDEO

Joshua Leads (Joshua 1)

<https://southside.cc/074-458>

---

*God goes with you, so be brave.*

## For the Teacher

Read this before you teach. This quarter we're walking through Israel's life *in the land* — the promised land they finally enter today, and the kings they'll get four hundred years from now. Today is the opening chapter: Moses has just died. Joshua, his right-hand man, has to lead two million people across a river into a country full of walled cities they've never seen. He's terrified. So God tells him, in three different verses, the same thing: *be strong and courageous*. The kids should leave with one idea firmly in place.

### KEY TRUTH

God goes with you, so be brave.

**Joshua isn't brave because he's qualified.** He's brave because of who's going with him. Don't miss this — it's the hinge of the whole chapter. God says it twice in verse 5 and verse 9: *I will be with you. I will not leave you.* The bravery command in verse 6, 7, and 9 is downstream of that promise. Joshua doesn't summon courage from inside himself. Courage comes *because* God is going with him. The kids need to hear that order.

**Three times “be strong and courageous.”** Joshua 1:6, 1:7, and 1:9. The repetition isn't accidental. God is naming the exact thing Joshua is afraid of. Don't gloss it. When you hit verse 9, slow down — that verse is the memory verse, and you want it landing on a class that just heard the same command twice already.

**Where this connects.** Last quarter the kids heard *God goes with the people he calls* (Q2L2 — Burning Bush). Today they hear what that looks like a generation later. Same God. Same promise. Different leader. If a kid was here for Exodus, they should feel the echo when Joshua hesitates — Moses hesitated too, and God said the same thing: *I will be with you.*

**What we're skipping and why.** Chapter 1 also has Joshua giving orders to the officers and to the eastern tribes (verses 10–18). It's good material but it's about Joshua executing the plan, not God giving the courage. Today stays in 1:1–9 — God's commission, God's promise, God's command. The river crossing is next week.

**Repeat the bottom line all morning.** Say it at least six times. Have the kids say it back. Write it on the board. End with it.

### MATERIALS

- Bibles for every student
- Whiteboard or large paper, markers
- Pencils, crayons or colored pencils
- Index cards
- Activity sheets (printed in advance from this week's activities — pick what you'll use)

## 1. Gather

Welcome the kids and have them sit together. Tell them you're starting a new story today, and it picks up where the last quarter left off.

### ASK

*Has anyone ever been asked to do something that felt way too big? What did it feel like?*

Let two or three kids answer. Don't push. Then tell them: today's story is about a man who got asked to do the biggest job of his life — and was scared out of his mind. Write the bottom line on the board:

SAY

*God goes with you, so be brave.*

## 2. The Story

### Setting the Stage

Before opening the Bible, the kids need to know where they are in the larger story. Tell them, in your own words:

SAY

*For the last few months, we've been following God's people through the wilderness. Moses led them out of Egypt. God gave them the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Then he led them, one slow step at a time, toward a land he had promised them — the land where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived hundreds of years before. The promised land.*

*Today they're finally there. They're standing at the edge. They can see it across the Jordan River. But there's a problem. Moses just died. Moses, who had led them for forty years, is gone. And the man God has chosen to take them in is a quiet, careful man named Joshua — who has spent his whole life following Moses around. Now Moses isn't there to follow. Now Joshua has to lead.*

### Reading the Text

Have everyone open to Joshua 1:1. Pick a confident reader for the first section.

#### Joshua 1:1–5

After the reading, work through these questions together:

DISCUSSION

1. Look at verse 2. What does God tell Joshua to do?

→ *Get up, cross the Jordan, lead the people into the land. The wilderness is over. The next thing starts now.*

2. In verse 3, what does God promise about the land?

→ *“Every place where you set your foot I will give you” — God is handing it over. Joshua isn't taking it; God is giving it.*

3. Verse 5 has the most important sentence in the chapter. What does God promise Joshua?

→ *“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Make them find both halves of that promise.*

### The Three Times

Tell the class to keep their Bibles open. You're going to read the next four verses, but they have a job: they need to listen for one phrase that God says three times.

Pick a confident reader.

#### Joshua 1:6–9

ASK

*What phrase did God say three different times?*

Write on the board:

## Be strong and courageous.

Then ask:

### DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God said it three times instead of just once?

→ *Because Joshua was that scared. When something is hard for somebody, you don't just say it once. You say it again. And again. Until they believe it.*

2. Look back at verse 5 and verse 9. What does God promise twice?

→ *"I will be with you" / "the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Make sure the kids see it in both verses.*

3. So why can Joshua be brave? Is it because he's strong? Because he's smart? Because he's a great fighter?

→ *No. He can be brave because God is going with him. The bravery command and the presence promise go together. God doesn't say "be brave because you're tough." He says "be brave because I'm coming."*

### TRANSITION

This is the most important thing in the lesson. The order matters. God's promise comes first. The bravery comes after.

## What Courage Actually Is

Stand up and walk to the board. Tell the kids:

### SAY

*A lot of people think being brave means you aren't scared. That's not what the Bible says. Joshua was scared — that's why God had to tell him three times to be brave. Courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage is doing the right thing while you're afraid, because you trust that God is with you.*

Write it on the board next to the bottom line:

**Courage = doing the right thing while you're afraid, because God is with you.**

## 3. The Point

Say the bottom line again, with the kids:

### SAY

*God goes with you, so be brave.*

## The Memory Verse

Have everyone turn to Joshua 1:9. Have a student read it aloud:

### SCRIPTURE

*Joshua 1:9*

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

Then read it three ways together: all together normally, all together standing tall ( chests out, shoulders back), all together with one hand on their heart.

**SAY**

*“Wherever you go” is the part you don’t want to miss. Not just into the promised land. Not just into Joshua’s hard job. Wherever you go. To school. To a hard conversation. To a hospital. To a new neighborhood. The God who went with Joshua goes with you.*

**The Index Cards**

Hand out index cards. Tell each student to write or draw one thing they’re scared to do but they know they should do — try out for something, talk to someone, tell the truth, stand up for a friend, ask for help. Tell them no one else will read it. They’ll keep it or take it home.

**NOTE**

While they write, walk around quietly. If a kid is stuck, ask them: “What’s something hard coming up this week?” Help them name it.

When they’re done, have everyone hold their card. Pray over the cards:

**PRAY**

*God, you went with Joshua across the river. You go with us into every hard thing on these cards. Help us remember when we’re scared that you don’t leave. Make us strong and courageous, not because we’re tough, but because you’re with us. Amen.*

---

## 4. The Work

Pick one or more activities from this week’s menu. Print enough copies for each kid in advance. The kids don’t have to do all of them — pick what fits the group’s energy and what time you have left.

The menu for this week:

- **Across the Jordan** — coloring page reinforcing the river-crossing scene and the bottom line.
- **Words for Joshua** — word search with the names, places, and key words from Joshua 1.
- **When I Need to Be Brave** — drawing prompt connecting the lesson to the kid’s own life.
- **Remember the Promise** — fill-in-the-blanks recall using the kids’ Bibles (Joshua 1).

The full production specs for each activity are in this week’s activities file.

**NOTE**

While the kids work, sit with them. Ask one or two what they’re working on. Reinforce the bottom line one more time before class ends. If you finish early, have a few kids share what they made. If you run long, send the activity sheets home.

---

## What Comes Next Week

Joshua’s army marches around the walled city of Jericho — for seven days, in silence, carrying nothing but trumpets. The walls fall. The kids will see what it looks like when God’s people obey a command that makes no sense at all.