

Crossing the Jordan

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 3–4

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 3:5; Hebrews 11:29–30

Israel must learn how to trust God with transitions in life. They must lean on Him as they move from what's familiar into the unknown. This relates to transitions teens will face as well (school, friendships, identity). While they are stepping into unfamiliar territory, they are now, finally, entering into God's promises.

Welcome & Introduction

SAY

“Do you recall when you first entered the doors of your high school as a freshman? Do you recall being excited, but a little uncertain of what awaited you? Entering those doors was like going through a gate to a new adventure that would form your identity and character. Now imagine after your high school graduation, and you are ready to begin everything you’ve been waiting for—your future, your calling, your purpose. But the gate is sealed shut. No key. No handle. No way through.” What would you do?

Take a few quick responses.

TRANSITION

That’s exactly what Israel was facing. Their wandering began by miraculously crossing the Red Sea. With that crossing their old life as slaves ended, but they embarked on a lengthy adventure in which they had to trust God every day as He molded their character and shaped them into a distinct nation. Now, their wanderings ending they stand before the promise of inheriting the land in which they will become that nation. But the Jordan river seems uncrossable and forbidding. God isn’t just the key to open the gate, but He is the key they need to prosper as they begin their new lives in the Promised Land.

Following God as we Enter the Unknown

Joshua 3:1–4

Teaching Points

- Israel didn’t rush into the Jordan. They camped, waited, and listened. We need to see that God’s work in our lives often begins with slowing down, paying attention, and getting ready.
- Israel had never been “this way before.” God was leading them into new territory — literally and spiritually.
- God deliberately chose flood stage for the crossing. The Jordan at this time was a raging torrent, making the crossing comparable to the Red Sea. God bookends Israel’s wilderness training with two water miracles: the Red Sea ended slavery, and the Jordan begins inheritance. The same God who opened the sea now opens the river. He delights in showing His might when we are most helpless.
- Entering into uncertain new phases in our lives occurs frequently. These life transitions require that we follow God in order to succeed.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God made Israel wait and prepare before crossing the Jordan?
2. Israel had never been “this way before.” What’s something new or unknown in your life right now, or something you recently encountered that’s a new experience?
3. Why do you think God wanted the Ark — His presence — to go first? What does that say about how we should approach big decisions?

KEY TRUTH

God had patiently been preparing His people for this moment. In a sense, crossing the Jordan would complete their schooling in the wilderness, just as crossing the Red Sea had ended their lives as

KEY TRUTH

slaves and opened up their retraining to learn who God was and who they were to become. Now, they are crossing over to live out their purpose God had set them up for.

Set Up & Set Apart

Joshua 3:5–8

Teaching Points

- Joshua tells the people, “Consecrate yourselves.” Before God works *around* us, He often works *in* us. Teens need to see that spiritual readiness matters.
- Consecrate: Is synonymous with sanctify. In this case, it is the devotion or setting apart of oneself, or something to the worship or service of the Lord.
- Before they crossed the Red Sea, their parents had not fully devoted themselves to the Lord and as a result they endured hardships and struggles in the wilderness. Before crossing the Jordan and claiming their inheritance God directs the people to devote themselves fully to Him.
- Joshua’s name in Hebrew is Yeshua. This is the same name the English name Jesus is derived from. In many ways Joshua prefigures what Jesus does for His people, especially as the One who leads them out of wandering in this world and into the Promised Land.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think God wanted Israel to “consecrate” themselves before He acted?
2. What ways are Christians called to consecrate themselves to God’s service today?
3. Why do you think God chose to exalt Joshua publicly? What does that teach us about God’s view leadership?
4. The name Joshua is the Hebrew equivalent of Jesus. What parallels do you see in Joshua and Jesus?

KEY TRUTH

Joshua doesn’t promote himself — God publicly affirms him. We need to see that real influence comes from faithfulness, not self-promotion.

Waterproof Sandals

Joshua 3:9–17

Teaching Points

- Joshua says, “Come here and listen... this is how you will know.” God wants us to experience His faithfulness, not just learn facts.
- The priests had to put their feet in the river first. Breakthrough often comes after obedience, not before.

DISCUSSION

1. According to verses 10–11 what did Joshua say would let the people know that they would successfully conquer the Promised Land they were entering?
2. Why do you think God waited until the priests stepped in before stopping the river?
3. How does knowing that God goes first (the ark entering the water) change the way you face challenges?

KEY TRUTH

God makes a way where there is no way. The Jordan was at flood stage — humanly impossible. God specializes in impossible moments, and He goes first.

Memorial Day

Joshua 4:1–7

Teaching Points

- God wants us to remember what He’s done for us. The 12 stones were a physical reminder of God’s faithfulness that were intended to instill faithfulness for generations to come.
- If a household, family, community, or a nation is to remain faithful to the Lord, it is the responsibility of each of us to teach and train up the next generation and to explain why we do the things that our faith calls us to do.

DISCUSSION

1. What are some ways the church observes memorials to recall God’s faithfulness today?
2. What are some ways we can promote a “spiritual memory” of God’s faithfulness in our personal lives?
3. How does remembering the past strengthen our courage for the future?

KEY TRUTH

The stones weren’t just about what God did — they were fuel for trusting what God will do. Christians have their own memorial that works the same way: the Lord’s Supper. Jesus doesn’t come back each generation to relive His life. His sacrifice is remembered in communion. And just as Israelite children pointed at the stones and asked, “What do those mean?” our children ask the same question about the bread and the cup. We whisper our witness back to them the same way Israelite fathers answered their children about the stones.

Memory Verses & Closing

Memory Verses

- Joshua 3:5
- Hebrews 11:29–30

Challenge for the Week: **Create a Reminder of What God Did**

Just like Israel built a memorial of 12 stones, create a simple reminder of how God has showed up in

your life. Sometime this week, write down one way you saw God help you, guide you, or strengthen you — and keep it somewhere you'll see it. Perhaps you may continue to do this weekly in order to build the habit of remembering God's faithfulness.

Options:

- write a word on a sticky note
- put a small rock on your dresser
- set a reminder on your phone
- write a short sentence in a journal
- draw a symbol on a card

Close in prayer.