



UNIT 7 | SESSION 1

GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

JOSHUA 1

KEY PASSAGE:

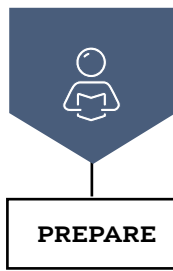
Psalm 119:105

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God's kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

We often think that fear is the absence of courage, and to some degree, it is. However, true courage is not someone who is free of fear. Courage comes to us most often, and especially when we are young, from the presence of another. In C. S. Lewis' *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy, the young heroine of Lewis' stories, was on a boat that went into the dark night of a cave where their worst fears were realized.

Going into the cave, they all were afraid. Inside the cave, their fears were realized. They were in the middle of the night and without hope, and Lucy (whose name means "light") asked Aslan to send help.

Aslan (the Christ figure in Lewis' work) answered by sending his light into their darkness and his word to her heart. He said, "Courage, dear heart."

The gospel tells us that our greatest enemy, sin, and our greatest fear, death, has no hold on us—not because of courage that rises up from within us, but from courage that came from outside of us. Jesus came from outside of us and said to us through His life, death, and resurrection, "Courage, dear heart."

The promise of peace, true rest that Moses and now Joshua sought, was not conditional on what they saw in front of them. It was

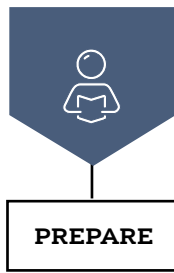
based on the character of God. The promise God gave to Joshua was the promise of His presence in the middle of the dark night. This promise is true for us and is experienced in the person and work of Christ.

As you prepare to teach, take a moment to allow the Person of God's Spirit to whisper to your heart what God's Word proclaims to be true, no matter how difficult your week or dark your night. You are loved, you are cared for, you are not alone. Christ is with you. Christ has gone before you; Christ is interceding for you.

Remember the words God gave Joshua: "Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). What a promise. What a Savior.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Joshua: one of the 12 Israelites spies appointed by Moses to scout the land of Canaan, chosen by God as Moses' successor to lead the Israelites to the promised land



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ “Strong and Courageous” activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ blindfold (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “God Encouraged Joshua” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 7, Session 1” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “Annie Armstrong Biography” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “A Light On My Path (Psalm 119:105)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



LOVE

Discussion & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ envelopes

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ index cards
- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ What was something scary you have had to do? Were you able to overcome that fear? ”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Strong and Courageous” activity page.

| **SAY** “ You did a great job of listing things that make you feel courageous! God’s Word shows us that we have reasons to be strong and courageous. In today’s story, we’ll hear what God said to Joshua, one of Israel’s leaders. ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: STUDY, REMEMBER, AND OBEY



Encourage kids to stand in a circle. Pick one kid to start by acting out a silly motion or dance move (flap arms like a bird, hold hands to head like moose antlers, wiggle shoulders while making a silly noise, etc.).

Lead the rest of the group to repeat the move. Encourage the kid to the right of the first player to choose a new motion. Lead the group to repeat the first player’s motion and add on the second player’s motion. Continue this pattern around the circle until everyone has a turn to lead a move.

| **SAY** “ Remembering all those moves in order was difficult by the time we got all the way around the circle! In today’s Bible story, God told Joshua to study, remember, and obey His commands. We’ll find out why. ”

☐ OPTION 2: BLINDFOLD RELAY RACE

Form two teams of kids. Line up each team against one wall. Instruct the first kid in each line to cover his eyes with his hands or a blindfold.

When you say go, the second player in line should guide the blindfolded player to the opposite wall and back. When the players return to their teams, the first player goes to the end of the line, the second player wears the blindfold, and the next player in line becomes the leader.

Encourage kids to continue the relay until everyone has experienced both roles. The first team to finish wins.

| **SAY** “ Did anyone feel scared walking across the room when you couldn’t see? You had to trust the leader to get you safely across the room and back. When we feel scared, God leads us where we need to go. We can always trust Him. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, I’m [your name], and I’m so excited you are here this morning! Who brought your Bible to church today? Hold your Bibles up and show me! [Distribute Bibles to any kids who need one.] The Bible tells us true stories about things that happened a long time ago. Because the Bible is God’s Word, these stories still have a lot to teach us today!”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “If you’ve been coming for a while, you probably know that we study the Bible each week. For the next few weeks, we will learn why the Bible is important. To do that, we’ll learn a big picture question. Our big picture question is, **What is the Bible?** How would you answer that question? [Allow kids to respond.] Great! Here is the answer we’ll memorize: **The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.**

Isn’t it amazing that God gave us a book so we can know Him and what He has done? Let’s say our big picture question together. **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.**”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “In the Book of Genesis, we read how God promised that Abraham would have a big family and live in the land of Canaan. Abraham’s descendants were called Israelites. For many years, the Israelites lived in Egypt as slaves until God used Moses to lead them out of Egypt toward the promised land; however, the Israelites disobeyed God and had to wander in the desert for 40 years. Finally, it was time for a new generation of Israelites to enter the promised land.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Joshua 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Encouraged Joshua.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

“God’s people were near the land of Canaan (KAY nuhn). This was the promised land, the place God said Abraham’s descendants would one day live. **The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The older generation had died. Moses, their leader, had died too, and now it was time for the remaining people to go into the land.**

God chose Joshua to be the new leader of Israel. It was a big job, but God encouraged Joshua. He promised to give Joshua success in the land. God said, “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. **I will be with you,** just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.”

Then God said, “**Be strong and courageous.**” God wanted Joshua to lead the people into the land because He had promised it to His people. God said, “Be strong and very courageous to obey everything Moses taught you. Study, remember, and obey the commands written in the book of instruction. If you do this, you will be successful in whatever you do.”

God encouraged Joshua again: “**Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, will be with you wherever you go.**”

So Joshua sent a message throughout the Israelites’ camp: “**Get ready! We are going to cross the Jordan River and take this land. God is giving it to us, just like He promised.**”

The Israelites agreed and got ready. “**We will do everything you have commanded us,**” they told Joshua. “**We will go everywhere you send us. We will obey you like we obeyed Moses. We trust that God will be with you like He was with Moses.**”

Christ Connection: God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God’s kingdom. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Sketch a diagram: Draw a river on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Add stick figures on one side of the river. Label the area on the other side *Promised Land*.

Use hand motions: Perform a hand motion each time you say a key word from the Bible story. Consider searching online for the sign language motion to use with the words *encourage*, *strong*, and *courageous*.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites after Moses died. God gave Joshua a big job! In fact, Joshua couldn’t do the job without God to help him. Do you think God’s words to Joshua helped him move forward and lead God’s people? Why? **[Pause for kids to respond.]** God commanded Joshua multiple times not to be afraid because God would go with him and make him successful.

The Israelites often sinned and disobeyed God, so God instructed Joshua to remind the Israelites to obey God’s rules. God gave the Israelites rules to show them what He required. Think about the rules you have at home. If your mom tells you not to jump on the bed but you run into your room and jump on the bed every night at bedtime, is your mom very happy about that? No way! Like you need to remember rules at home and obey them to honor your parents, God’s people needed to remember and obey His laws.

We can read the rules God commanded the Israelites to follow in the Law, the first five books of the Bible; however, the Israelites couldn’t obey God because of the sin in their hearts. Just as Joshua couldn’t be a good leader without God’s help, Israel couldn’t obey God without God’s help.

In the New Testament, we can read how God fulfilled His promises from the Old Testament. God sent Jesus to perfectly obey the law, die in our place, and rise again on the third day. While God’s rules show us how we sin, Jesus’ death and resurrection takes away our sin. When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God also sends the Holy Spirit to go with us everywhere, like God promised to go with Joshua. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to obey God and understand the Bible. **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God’s kingdom. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 7, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What should you do if a friend or family member consistently points out your mistakes?
2. How can you encourage or build others up with your words?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as the Israelites moved into the promised land. Whether God calls us to a new place or wants us to stay where we are, we can be on mission for God. Annie Armstrong spent her life helping support missions work all over the world by organizing the Women’s Missionary Union, a group for women who wanted to support missionaries



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

and help the gospel go everywhere. Annie cared for people in her area by helping provide for their needs and telling them about Jesus. She also wrote many letters asking other Christians to help missionaries. Listen closely to this video and see if you can hear how many letters Annie wrote. ”

Play the missions video. Ask the kids to recall how many letters Annie wrote. (18,000 in a year) Pray and ask God to help the kids find ways to support missionaries from anywhere.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 119:105 together.

SAY “ God reminded Joshua what was true so Joshua wouldn’t be afraid. We can hear God tell us the same things by reading the Bible. ”

Guide kids to sit in a circle. Encourage them to clap while they say the first word of the verse. Then, lead kids to say the first two words of the verse, clapping each time they say a word. Repeat, adding the next word of the key passage each time. Continue until kids say the entire key passage.

Lead kids to sing “A Light On My Path (Psalm 119:105).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

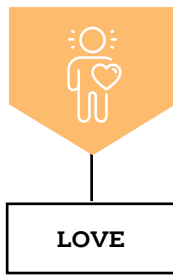
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, thank You for going with us wherever we go so we don’t have to be afraid. Give us courage and wisdom to obey You and tell others about You. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Joshua 1. Explain that the Book of Joshua is in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the Israelites lived under the list of rules God gave them called the Law. In the New Testament, Jesus came to fulfill the Law.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 1:7 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud. Consider pointing out the location of Canaan (F10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map.

SAY “God gave His people rules so they would know the best way to live. Following those rules helped them understand God and His heart. Since the people in the land did not know God or follow His rules, they were far from God. If the Israelites followed the people’s example and disobeyed God’s rules, they also would be far from God. God wants His people to know and love Him, so He reminded them to keep His commandments.

Even though God reminded the Israelites many times to obey, the Israelites still sinned and turned away from God. At just the right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again to defeat sin and death. Jesus’ sacrifice made the way for us to have a right relationship with God.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “What are some situations in which we might need to be courageous?”

Lead kids to consider experiences like making new friends, going somewhere for the first time, or standing up for what is right. Invite kids to share a recent experience where they needed courage.

SAY “How can knowing God is with us help us be brave?”

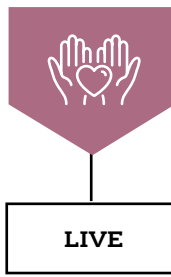
Encourage kids that they are not alone. Remind kids that God helped the Israelites face an impossible task and succeed. Invite kids to consider God’s power, mercy, and wisdom in every situation.

SAY “Who can we encourage by telling them that God is with them?”

Invite kids to think of friends or family who might be encouraged to know God is with them. Encourage kids to share about God when their friends or family feel scared. Ask kids if they can think of any other situations when it could help to know God is with them.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: ENCOURAGE GIVING



Brainstorm with the kids some reasons why missionaries need the support of churches.

SAY “ God encouraged Joshua as he prepared to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Annie Armstrong’s letters encouraged people to give generously and live on mission for God. Let’s spend some time writing our own encouraging letters to help the gospel reach all people. ”

Give each kid paper, an envelope, and a pencil. Encourage them to draw a picture or write a letter explaining why Christians should give to missions. Suggest they begin their letters with the greeting, Dear Christian.

Invite the kids to deliver the letters to their families or create a bulletin board in the church that features the letters as a way to encourage giving.

☐ OPTION 2: ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS



Guide each kid to find Joshua 1:9 in the Bible and copy the words onto two index cards. On one card, lead kids to write the name of a friend or family member who might be encouraged by knowing God is with them. On the other, instruct kids to write their own names. Distribute crayons, markers, and stickers for kids to decorate the cards.

Encourage kids to give the first card to the person whose name they wrote on it and tell the friend about today’s Bible story.

SAY “ When you feel scared, you can look at this card and remember that God is with you. One way we can obey God is by telling others about Him. Giving these cards to friends or family members is a great opportunity to tell them about Jesus. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.