

# Joshua & the Israelites Enter the Promised Land

Joshua 1 - 5

## PPT Title

## Joshua & the Israelites Enter the Promised Land

**Main Point:** There is nothing to fear when we trust and obey God.

## PPT Verse

**Key Verse:** *Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go.* - Joshua 1:9

**Props:** 2 towels or cloths. 1 staff or stick, 12 large stones (small enough for students to carry)

## BACKGROUND

**Teacher:** Before you begin to teach, choose two volunteers to add interest to the story of the "changing of the guard" of the leadership of Israel. Choose an older child or adult to be Moses. Choose a smaller child to be Joshua. Put a towel or cloth on each of their heads, and give Moses a staff or stick. Start with your Moses up in front of the group.

**Say:** We have studied all about Moses, the leader of the Israelites. Now we will learn that it was time for God to bring in a NEW leader for His people. God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. God had promised to lead His people through the wilderness into a wonderful land. God said the land was good and spacious, and it would be flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). **Teacher: SHOW MAP.** The Israelites were now east of the Jordan River. God was going to give the Israelites the land that was west of the Jordan. **Teacher: REFER to MAP.** The land was not a land without people, though. The land was already home to the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. **Teacher: Point to cities on map.** These people had homes, cities, and armies.

**Ask:** Do you think all of these people would just give up their home land when the Israelites came? *No.*

**Say:** We will see that the Israelites will have to participate in many battles to conquer this land. God told the Israelites that they would conquer all of these people, and they must destroy\* them totally (Deuteronomy 7:1).

**Note to Teacher:** The Israelite's disobedience on this point \* will be a very important point when we study the book of Judges.

## THE "CHANGING OF THE GUARD" (Numbers 27:12-23)

**Teacher:** Call up your Moses.

**Say:** Moses had led God's people for many years. Because the Israelites did not obey God while they were in the wilderness, God did not lead them straight into the land He had promised them. The trip from Egypt to their new home should have taken the Israelites only DAYS, but instead, they wandered in the desert for 40 YEARS. All of that time, God PROVIDED everything the Israelites needed (Deuteronomy 29:5-6). The



very people who had been delivered out of Egypt by mighty miracles soon mumbled and grumbled about God and His provision for them! God said none of those grumblers would enter the Promised Land. Only Joshua and his good friend Caleb would enter (Numbers 14:21-24, 30), because Joshua and Caleb followed God whole-heartedly (Numbers 32:12). After forty years of wandering, the entire generation of Israelites who were delivered from slavery had died, except Joshua and Caleb. It was the children who had been born during the wilderness years who were left now. By this time, Moses was over 100 years old.

**Call up your Joshua to act this out with your Moses:**



Joshua had been Moses' helper since Joshua was a young boy (Numbers 11:28). God told Moses that Moses would die soon. Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because on one occasion he had disobeyed God in front of all the Israelites (Numbers 20:8-12). Moses asked God to appoint another man to lead the Israelites (Numbers 27:15-17). **Have kids act out:** God told Moses to lay his hands on Joshua, and Joshua received the spirit of wisdom (Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9). God told Joshua that he would be the one to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 31:23). God warned that after the Israelites were in the Promised Land and their lives were going very well, they would turn from God and begin to worship other gods. God said He would burn with anger and many disasters would come upon the people (Deuteronomy 31:16-18).



**Use a chair for Moses to step up on. (Be careful!)** Then God instructed Moses to climb a mountain. There he could see the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. **Point into the distance for the "Promised Land."** On top of the Mountain, Moses died at the age of 120 (Deuteronomy 34:1-4, 7). **Dismiss your volunteers.**

**Ask:** Do you remember what God told Moses, way back when Moses was afraid to go talk to Pharaoh in Egypt?

*God said, "**I will be with you.**" - Exodus 3:12a*



**Say:** God always keeps His promises! He was always with Moses. Now Joshua was in charge of all the Israelites. Listen to what God told him:

**"I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will never leave you. I will never desert you.**



**"Be strong and brave. You will lead these people, and they will take the land as their very own. It is the land I promised with an oath to give their people long ago.**

**"Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn away from it to the right or the left. Then you will have success everywhere you go. Never stop reading this Scroll of the Law. Day and night you must think about what it says. Make sure you do everything that is written in it. Then things will go well with you. And you will have great success.**

*"Here is what I am commanding you to do. **Be strong and brave.** Do not be terrified. Do not lose hope. I am the Lord your God. I will be with you everywhere you go." - Joshua 1:5b-9*

**Say:** Notice how many times God told Joshua to be strong and brave.

**Ask:** Why do you think God repeated phrase this so many times? *It was important, God wanted Joshua to remember it. Hard times were coming. They would have to fight many battles.*

**Ask:** Do you have to be strong and brave when everything is easy? *No.*



The Israelites would have to cross a big river, called the Jordan River. Joshua told the people to get ready. They would cross the Jordan River in three days.

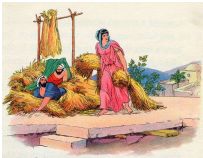
### **RAHAB & THE SPIES** (Joshua 2)

**Ask:** What is a spy? *Someone who goes in secret to find out information.*

**Ask:** What would a military spy do? *Go to the enemy's side to find out how strong the enemy is, and find out the enemy's plans.*



**Say:** Joshua sent two spies to check out the new land, especially the city of Jericho. The two men crossed the Jordan River to get to the Promised Land. They went to the home of a woman named Rahab. The king of Jericho heard there were Israelite spies in his city. The king sent an urgent message to Rahab. He demanded that she turn the men in to him.



Rahab hid the men under large bundles of flax plants on her roof. She told the king's men that the spies had already left the city. Rahab went up to talk to the men. She told them that she and her neighbors had heard terrifying stories about the Israelites. She knew that God was going to give the land to them. Rahab had heard about the mighty works God had done for the Israelites. They had all heard about God parting the Red Sea, and the times God made the Israelites able to conquer other people.

*When we heard about it, our hearts melted away in fear. Because of you, we aren't brave anymore. The Lord your God is the God who rules over heaven above and earth below.* - Joshua 2:11

**Say:** Rahab begged Joshua's spies to spare her life when the Israelites came to take the land, because she had protected them from the king. The spies promised never to harm her or anyone in her house as long as she did not tell anyone what they were doing.

**Ask:** Do you think the spies will keep their promise? *We will find out next week!*



Rahab's house was built into the wall that went around the city, so she let the men down out of her window with a rope. The men ran into the hills and waited until it was safe to return to Joshua. God protected the spies by sending them to the home of Rahab - a woman who feared and respected God's power. When the men crossed back over the river to report back, they told Joshua everything that had happened.

*They said, "We're sure the Lord has given the whole land over to us. All of the people there are weak with fear because of us."* - Joshua 2:24

**Note to teacher:** The question may come up - "Didn't Rahab lie?" Indeed, she did. God hates a lying tongue (Proverbs 6:16-17). But in this case, Rahab lied to spare the lives of two of God's chosen people. Rahab feared God (and His people) more than she feared men (the king and his men). This is a principle found in Luke 12:4-5. She took a great risk, lying for these men. Hebrews 11:31 tells us Rahab's life was spared because of her faith. James 2:25 says she was considered righteous for hiding the spies and sending their pursuers in a different direction. Her actions gave proof of her faith and fear of God. Notice, James specifically names Rahab as a prostitute. Clearly, prostitution is wrong, just as lying is wrong. We are all sinners. We are only considered righteous by our faith.

### **CROSSING THE JORDAN** (Joshua 3)

**Teacher:** Before you begin, place 12 large stones on the floor (in your "river bed").



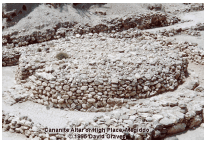
**Say:** Joshua and the Israelites camped next to the Jordan River for three days. The officers told the people that the priests would come by carrying the Ark of the Covenant. This was the golden box that was placed inside the Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place), in the heart of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:34). When the priests passed by with the ark, the people were to follow them.

*The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to honor you in the eyes of all of the people of Israel. Then they will know that I am with you, just as I was with Moses. Speak to the priests who carry the ark of the covenant. Tell them, 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan River, go into the water and stand there.' " - Joshua 3:7*

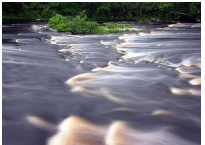
The Bible tells us that the river was at flooding stage. The water was extra high. But as soon as the priests who were carrying the ark touched their feet into the water, the water from upstream stopped flowing! The priests stood in the middle of the river bed, on dry ground!

The water piled up in a big heap and the Israelites crossed to the other side.

**Ask:** What does this remind you of? *The time God parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21; Joshua 4:23).*



**Say:** God instructed Joshua to have one man from each of the 12 tribes to take a stone from the middle of the Jordan River bed. The men were to put them together to make a **memorial**. A memorial is something that helps us remember something important. For example, there are memorials that are statues to remember important people, such as a president or king. This memorial of stones was made to remind the people of what God did for them that day. **Teacher:** Call on twelve students to each move one stone and make one big pile out of the "river bed." All the people who witnessed the water parting were to tell their children and their grandchildren about the amazing thing God did that day. After everyone had crossed over, God told Joshua to call the priests who were carrying the ark to come out of the river bed. The minute they stepped out of the Jordan, the great waters began to flow again!



Remember, God began that day by telling Joshua that God would honor him. God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

*That day the Lord honored Joshua in the eyes of all of the people of Israel. They had respect for Joshua as long as he lived. They respected him just as much as they had respected Moses. - Joshua 4:14*

Joshua told the Israelites why God had parted the waters for them:

*He did it so that all of the nations on earth would know that He is powerful. He did it so that you would always have respect for the Lord your God." - Joshua 4:24*

PPT

Joshua 1:9

God told Joshua many times to be brave and not to fear. It took bravery to lead millions of people to cross a river that was at flood stage. And, in the weeks ahead, we will see many more times when Joshua will need to be brave. He will face many battles in order to follow God's instructions. God didn't tell Joshua to be brave because he was so young and strong. God told Joshua to be brave because GOD WAS WITH HIM!

**Application:** When you are following God and obeying His word, be brave. Remember that you have nothing to fear. God will always be with you! God instructed Joshua's men to build a memorial to remember what He had done. This would help Joshua and the others to be brave, because we draw strength from remembering God's power and the times God has worked on our behalf.

**Ask:** What can you do to remember the times you have seen God at work? *Keep a journal where I write or draw pictures of what God has done, Keep a scrapbook or treasure box with reminders, Tell others about what God has done.*

**PPT Main Point**

**Main Point:** There is nothing to fear when we trust and obey God