



1

God Calls Joshua

Key Theme

- God requires and rewards obedience.

Key Passages

- Joshua 1:1–9; Matthew 4:1–10

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of obeying God's commands.
- Describe how Jesus is an example for obeying God's commands.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will find the hidden message by completing the activity sheet.



Studying God's Word

page 5

God called Joshua to take the Israelites into the Promised Land. God promised to be with Joshua but warned him that he must obey all the commandments given through Moses in order to receive the help and blessing from God that he would need. Jesus also had to obey God's Law in order to provide our redemption. He is our example for obedience and for relying on God's Word for strength when we are tempted.



Activity 1: Responsibilities and Rewards Ribbon

page 9

Students will write Joshua's responsibilities and God's rewards for Joshua on a paper ribbon.



Activity 2: Around the Promised Land

page 11

Students will journey with a partner through four areas of the Promised Land.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print one Hidden Message Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Hidden Message Sheet for each student
- Hidden Message Sheet Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print the Lesson Board Work Outline from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work Outline



RESPONSIBILITIES AND REWARDS RIBBON

- Print and cut out one Rewards Ribbon from the Resource DVD-ROM on light blue paper for each student.

- Rewards Ribbon for each student
- Pencils



AROUND THE PROMISED LAND

- Print and cut out one set of Landmark Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Tape cards to four chairs.
- Make the Jordan River out of blue paper.

- Four chairs with one Landmark Card taped to each chair
- Blue Paper and Jordan River Card
- Bandanas or fabric for blindfolds



Memory Verse

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading Joshua 1, Matthew 4:1–11, and 1 Corinthians 16:13–14.

In the book of Joshua, we learn that the time had finally come for the Israelites to cross the Jordan into the land that had been promised by God to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants (Genesis 12:7, 26:2–3, 35:11–12).

As background, God had previously led Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus and had brought them to the borders of the land they were to possess. But at that time, only Caleb and Joshua showed faith and confidence that God would fulfill His promise and give this land along with its giants into their hands (Numbers 13). Only Joshua and Caleb spoke favorably of the land, pleading with the Israelites to have courage and faith in God's promises—and to trust that the Lord was with them—there was nothing to fear (Numbers 14:6–9). But the people would not heed their pleas.

Because the people refused to obey God and enter the Promised Land, God sentenced the entire generation, all those aged 20 years and older (except for Joshua and Caleb), to die in the wilderness (Numbers 14:28–30).

Now that generation was gone. And God was about to fulfill the promise made to His people so long ago. In Joshua 1, after the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua (Joshua 1:1). God reassured him that He would be with him (Joshua 1:9). That promise, however, was coupled with the command to be obedient—to “observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you” (Joshua 1:7). God's fixed purpose was to honor the covenant He had made to the people and to bring them into their promised possession. God's purpose would stand, but He would demand obedience from the Israelites in order for them to see the fulfillment of His promises. He commanded Joshua to consider His Word, to meditate on it day and night, and to observe to do it. Only then would his way be prosperous and only then would God grant him success (Joshua 1:8).

It may seem mysterious to us that God has fixed purposes that do not change and will be fulfilled, and that these purposes are bound to conditions of obedience. God demands obedience in order for us to see His promises fulfilled, just as He required the

obedience of His own Son to bring redemption to sinners. For Jesus's perfect sacrifice on the Cross was by the “determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), and yet it was fulfilled through Jesus's perfect obedience (Philippians 2:8).

Had Jesus failed to obey the will of His loving Father in heaven when He was tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1–11), He would have been disqualified as our Redeemer. Had Joshua and the Israelites failed to obey God's commands (Joshua 1:6–8), they would have been disqualified to enter the Promised Land. Obedience is necessary to see the fulfillment of God's promises.

As we look into these two accounts of obedience to God, we recognize similarities. In Joshua's case, his obedience is tied to his knowledge and commitment to the Book of the Law (Joshua 1:8). In Jesus's case, His temptations were overcome and His obedience was demonstrated by His understanding and confidence in the truth of God's Word. He repeatedly put the devil off by reciting the Word of God (Matthew 4:4, 4:7, 4:10).

In both cases, knowledge of and obedience to God's Word provided the strength and courage to persevere. In both cases, obedience led through extremely difficult circumstances to reap immense blessings. Joshua and Israel would fight and sacrifice to possess the Promised Land (Joshua 1:14–15). Jesus would suffer and die for the redemption of His people for all eternity (1 Peter 3:18).

Joshua knew God's Word. Joshua believed God's promises. And Joshua knew that receiving God's promises of blessings depended on his obedience to God's Word.

Jesus knew God's Word. Jesus believed God's promise for redemption. And Jesus knew that the redemption and forgiveness of sins for all who would believe in Him would be fulfilled as He was obedient to His Father's will.

The Word of God is truly living and powerful. As we mature in our Christian walk, we will see more clearly that it is knowing the Word of God, meditating on it day and night, and being careful to do everything written in it that leads to obedience to our holy God. We will learn that obedience is often difficult and costs much by the world's standards. But it is only by the obedience wrought through God's holy Word, by His Holy Spirit, that we are given the opportunity and privilege to be used of God in accomplishing His perfect will.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The overthrow of Canaan by Israel—in battle, by destroying those living there—is often a historical detail that people of our time struggle to accept. Is the destruction of these tribes really consistent with a God of love who provided the great sacrifice of His own Son to purchase the forgiveness of sinners? In Deuteronomy 9:5 and 18:12 (read in context), it is clear that Israel's possession of the land is part of God's judgment on the idolatry and wickedness of these nations. The nations Israel was commanded to drive out had for many generations practiced witchcraft, human sacrifice, and much wickedness (see Deuteronomy 18:9–11). Many generations had joined in these practices, and God used Israel to accomplish the judgment He had ordained for these nations. Remember that God's righteousness demands that all sin is judged. God's judgment is a serious and a righteous matter. It is sobering to think of the judgment visited upon these idolatrous nations, but it is perfectly consistent with God's holiness and repeated promises that judgment on sin is sure. The destruction of these nations is not arbitrary or harsh; it is the display in history of the truth that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This verse goes on to say "but the gift

of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let us praise our mighty Savior for the gift of eternal life for all who trust in Him.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, you are the Word made flesh. I read about your life and marvel. You gave us the perfect model of how to wield the Sword of the Spirit! My heart's desire is to use your Word to fend off temptation and draw the lost to you. Please continue to humble me and use me to teach my students to treasure every word you have given us. Help them to recognize that you have a perfect will that you want to accomplish through them. Use your Word, the example of Joshua, and this lesson to inspire them to live out their faith with strength and courage. For those who are still unsure about who you are, have mercy on them, Lord, and draw them to yourself.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Hidden Message Sheet by naming the pictures. Then, using certain letters, they will fill in the blanks to discover the hidden message.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Use the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson throughout the year to quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes before each lesson to reinforce the important truths the students have heard in the past lessons.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Before we read our passage today, let's review what has happened in our earlier lessons. Remember, Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea, and God provided for all of their needs as they journeyed through the wilderness. They finally made it to the Promised Land. God promised to send an angel to protect them and go before them into the land of their enemies—the land God had promised them. Moses sent 12 spies into the Promised Land. But only Joshua and Caleb had faith in the one true God. They believed that God would protect them as they went in to conquer their enemies. When Joshua and Caleb came back, the people would not listen to them. They were afraid and did not put their trust in the God who had brought them out of Egypt.

Because they were afraid, and listened to the 10 spies instead of Joshua and Caleb, they did not go into the Promised Land. And because they disobeyed God, they were made to wander in the wilderness for 40 more years. Almost all of the people, including Moses, would die and never set foot in the Promised Land. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the young people would ever see the land that God had promised to them.

After Moses died in the land of Moab, Joshua became the leader. The Bible tells us that Joshua was full of wisdom.

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

Please open your Bibles to Joshua 1. We're going to read Joshua 1:1–9. This was a very important time for the Israelites. God was about to lead them into the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. *Allow time for the students to find the passage. Encourage the students who have already found Joshua 1 to help others.*

Joshua 1:1–4

Let's read our passage and see what important words God said to Joshua. Let's start by reading the first four verses. *Read Joshua 1:1–4 aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

➤ Re-read the text so the children can answer the questions. Or encourage them to look in their Bibles to find the answers.

➤ Print the Lesson Board Work Outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning. As time permits allow students to help fill in the T-chart on the board.

I'm going to ask some questions about what I just read. Use your Bible to answer these questions. Remember, this is all true. It really happened. Keep this in mind as we learn about Joshua.

- ? Who are the two characters in this passage? *Joshua 1:1. God and Joshua.*
- ? God was speaking to Joshua. What happened before this? Who had died? *Joshua 1:1. Moses had died.*
- ? Then what did the Lord command Joshua to do? *Joshua 1:2. Take the people across the Jordan River, into the Promised Land.*

The Promised Land is also known as the Land of Canaan. We'll use both names as we talk about this passage. *Write "Promised Land = Land of Canaan" on the board.*

So God was trusting Joshua with a big job. Finally, the new generation was ready to enter the Land of Canaan! Keep in mind that many different people and large cities were already in the land. This land was not empty like the wilderness!

Now I'm going to read Joshua 1:5–9. This is what God said to Joshua before he went into the Promised Land. Find it in your Bible and listen carefully! *Read Joshua 1:5–9.*

- ? God said He would be with Joshua just like He had been with someone before Joshua. Who was that? *Joshua 1:5. Moses.*

God gave Joshua two promises in Joshua 1:5. Listen as I read it again. *Re-read Joshua 1:5.* God told Joshua that no one would be able to stand before him. In other words, God would give him victory in the battles.

- ? And what was the other promise? At the end of Joshua 1:5. *God would not leave him.*
- ? So two promises. We're going to make a chart on the board and I want your help filling it in. We are going to put Joshua's Responsibilities and God's Promises. *Make a T-chart on the board with the headings "Joshua's Responsibilities" and "God's Promises." See Lesson Board Work Outline.*

? Where should we add “victory” to our chart? *Under God’s Promises. Assign a student to write “victory” on the board for you under God’s Promises.*

? And where should I add the promise that God would never leave Joshua? **Under Joshua or God?** *Allow discussion. Assign a student to write “God would never leave Joshua” under God’s Promises.*

Yes, God promised Joshua victory if he would be strong and courageous. And God promised Joshua that He would never leave him. *Refer to the board work.*

Now, God commanded Joshua to do something three times in these passages. Listen as I read three of the verses again. *Read Joshua 1:6, 1:7, and 1:9 emphasizing “be strong and of good courage.”*

? What was God’s command to Joshua as he was to go into the Promised Land? Did you hear it in those verses? *Be strong and of good courage. Assign a student to write “be strong and courageous” under Joshua’s Responsibilities.*

? What does that mean when I say be courageous or of good courage? *Allow discussion.*

Yes, it means be brave! Have courage. Don’t be afraid. That’s what God told Joshua.

But what was Joshua supposed to do? How was he going to be able to go against all those nations and win? Listen as I read Joshua 1:7–8. *Read Joshua 1:7–8 aloud.*

? What was Joshua supposed to observe? *Joshua 1:7. All the law.*

? That’s right. And in Joshua 1:8 what was never supposed to depart from Joshua’s mouth? *The Book of the Law.*

? So, what was Joshua supposed to do? *Allow discussion. Observe/obey the law. Assign a student to write “observe/obey the law” under Joshua’s Responsibilities.*

? Who knows what that means, to “observe” the law? *Allow discussion.*

God wanted Joshua to be obedient to His Word. Let’s add that under Joshua’s Responsibilities on our chart. *Assign a student to write “be obedient” under Joshua’s Responsibilities.*

The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. And now God was telling them it was time to take over the land and the people who lived there. I’m not sure they were completely ready to go to war against strong enemies. But we know that God promised them victory. And He promised to never leave them or forsake them. Joshua 1:9 tells us all of this. Can someone read it for me? *Assign a reader, refer to the Memory Verse Poster, or read Joshua 1:9 to confirm.*

? But God still wanted Joshua to do something. So, let’s review. What did God demand that Joshua do? What were Joshua’s responsibilities? *Refer to board work. Be strong, courageous, observe and obey the law, be obedient.*

Joshua 1:7–8

Joshua 1:9

So you see, God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous. God told Joshua that the strength and courage would come as he studied and meditated on God's Law. God told Joshua to be obedient to His Word and the law. Joshua knew that knowing the Word of God would give him strength and courage to do what God had commanded him.

God also promised Joshua blessings in return for his obedience. We know that God said he would have victory. And God would not leave him.

? But there is another one. It is in Joshua 1:8. Who can tell me? What else did God promise Joshua? *Have students read Joshua 1:8. God would grant him success and make his way prosperous.*

That's right God promised to make his way prosperous and give him success. Let's add that to our chart. Which side should we put it on? *God's Promises. Assign a student to write "prosperous and success" under God's Promises.*

Very good. A lot of this information came from Joshua 1:9. And that is our memory verse. Let's repeat it a few times together. *Refer to the Memory Verse Poster. Read the memory verse by phrases. Have the students repeat it after you. Discuss some of the points a bit further if time allows.*

Discover the Truth

Do you see? Joshua was commanded to be strong and courageous in a very bad situation. But God told him how to do that. He was to obey the law, meditate on it, know it, and do all that was written in it. This is the only way Joshua would be able to take the Promised Land for God's people. *Refer to the Memory Verse Poster.*

And we can learn from this. God wants us to obey Him just like He commanded Joshua to obey. And when we do obey God's Word, we will have the strength and courage to do what He asks us to do. When we obey His Word, we know He will be with us.





Responsibilities and Rewards Ribbon

MATERIALS

- One Responsibilities and Rewards Ribbon for each student
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut out the ribbons before class. Students will fill in Joshua's Responsibilities and God's Rewards according to what you discussed in class and wrote on the board.

During our lesson we learned that God requires and rewards obedience. He makes wonderful promises if we will obey. And when we obey, He rewards us by fulfilling these promises. God rewarded Joshua, and in return He required certain responsibilities from him.

Refer to the T-chart that the class created on the board. Review Joshua's responsibilities and God's promises.

I want you to remember all of this. So we're going to make a "blue ribbon" and put Joshua's responsibilities and God's fulfilled promises—or rewards—to Joshua on it.

Pass out the Responsibilities and Rewards Ribbons. Have students fill in the ribbons according to the board work.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God gives amazing promises. We just have to be obedient to His commands. Joshua knew God's Word and believed His promises. He also knew that it was up to him to be obedient in order to receive God's rewards. God was going to be with Joshua and guide him as he took the Children of Israel into the Promised Land.



READ THE WORD

God promised Joshua success if he would believe and obey God's Law. Because of Joshua's faith he would go into the Promised Land and have victory over Israel's enemies. In the New Testament, Jesus believed and obeyed God's Law. He was able to stand strong against the devil when the devil tried to tempt Him! Let's read about that in Matthew 4:1–10. *Have the students find the verse and listen as you read.*

Matthew 4:1–10

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who was led into the wilderness? *Matthew 4:1. Jesus.*
- ? Who was there to tempt Him? *Matthew 4:1. The devil, or Satan.*
- ? Jesus was very hungry. What did the devil tell Jesus to do? *Matthew 4:3. Make the stones into bread.*
- ? Jesus said that man didn't live by bread alone. Man lives by something else. What is that? Let's look in Matthew 4:4. *By every word that God speaks.*
- ? How does God speak to us? Where do we hear God's Word? *The Bible.*

► Have the students look at and/or re-read the verses in order to get the answers from the text.

Jesus read the Bible, too. It wasn't exactly the same as what we have today, but He did read the Scriptures. And He was remembering them now. He knew God's Word would help Him to obey God and stand against the devil.

- ? The devil then took Jesus up into the holy city. What did the devil tell Jesus to do? *Read Matthew 4:6. Throw yourself down.*
- ? What did Jesus say back to the devil? *Matthew 4:7. It is written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God.*
- ? Jesus said, it is written. What was He talking about? What is written? *Hold up your Bible for a clue. God's Word, the Bible.*

That's right. God's Word is written. The Bible is written. Jesus was using God's Word again to give Him strength and courage to obey God. Finally, there was one more temptation. The devil took Jesus up on a very high hill and they looked down at all the kingdoms.

- ? What did the devil tell Jesus? *Read Matthew 4:9. All these could be His if He would bow down and worship the devil.*
- ? The devil was telling Jesus to bow down to him and worship him. And what did Jesus say? *Matthew 4:10. Away with you. It is written, you shall worship God only!*

Again Jesus said, it is written. Satan was trying to get Jesus to disobey God. Satan didn't want Jesus to obey God's Law. The devil knew that Jesus had to obey God's Law perfectly in order to make a way for us to be saved from God's punishment. Jesus's death could only forgive sins if Jesus did not sin. Jesus was able to obey God's Law perfectly and to give eternal life to those who trust in Him.

Discover the Truth

The devil tempted Jesus three times. And all three times Jesus remembered and spoke God's Word. Jesus said, "It is written, it is written, it is written!" God's Word helped Him to obey. Jesus knew God's Word and God's Word gave Jesus the strength and courage He needed to obey God and stand against the devil.

Jesus had to obey. If Jesus had sinned, He couldn't have been the perfect sacrifice God required. If Joshua had been disobedient, the Israelites would not have entered the Promised Land. There is a connection between God's will and obeying. God always accomplishes His will. But our obedience is required to fulfill it. In other words, God uses obedient people to accomplish His will.





Around the Promised Land

MATERIALS

- Landmark Cards
- Tape
- 4 chairs
- Blue paper for a river
- Bandanas or fabric for blindfolds

INSTRUCTIONS

Set up: Before class, tape together several pieces of blue paper and attach the Jordan River Card to the paper. The Jordan River will represent the start and finish line. Place four chairs around the room and tape the Landmark Cards to the fronts. Make sure there is plenty of room and nothing in the way of the chairs. Students will take turns role playing God and Joshua. Joshua will be blindfolded and God will link arms with Joshua. God will safely lead Joshua (blindfolded) from the Jordan River around the Promised Land. God will lead Joshua to each of the "borders" of the Promised Land. Depending on the size of your class, the game can be lengthened by switching the partners' roles. You can also time each team to see who gets around the Promised Land the fastest.

Remember, God promised Joshua He would be with him wherever he went. God was leading Joshua. Joshua was obedient to God. Joshua 1:4 tells us how big the Promised Land was. It tells us what the borders of the land were. Let me read it.

Read Joshua 1:4.

Did you get that? The borders were the 1) the Sinai wilderness, 2) the Euphrates River, 3) the land of the Hittites, and 4) the Great Mediterranean Sea. *As you repeat the borders, put the chairs around the room and attach the Landmark Cards if you haven't done that yet.*

Today you are going to journey around the Promised Land. We're going to go two at a time. One person will be Joshua. You

will be blindfolded. The other person will be God. And you will lead Joshua—you will not leave him or forsake him. You will start at the Jordan River and go to each of the borders. Joshua will have to sit down at each chair.

During the journey Joshua will say, "I will obey God."

God will say to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage." *Allow the students to repeat after you.*

After you and your partner have journeyed through the Promised Land to all four borders, you'll need to come back across the Jordan River to finish. Remember, Joshua will be blindfolded and will have to rely on God to take him or her through the Promised Land. **Let's get started!** *Put the blindfold on one student and let the first team go around the course. As the teams travel around the Promised Land, encourage God to say to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage" and Joshua to say, "I will obey God."*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Although Joshua was not really blindfolded as he went through the Promised Land, he did have to be obedient and rely on God for the entire journey. It is important that we always obey God's commands. When we obey God's commands He keeps His promises. When you were "blindfolded Joshua," you needed your partner "God" to show you where to go. Similarly, we all need God's direction in our lives. We can only know about God and learn what His direction might be by trusting and studying His Word.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Today we read God's words to Joshua. They reminded us how important obedience to God's Law is. God promised to be with Joshua and to give him success as they entered the land of Canaan. Joshua knew he had to obey God to have success and to get the rewards God promised.

We also read that Jesus knew and believed God's Word, too. When Satan tried to tempt Jesus, He remembered God's Word and it gave Him strength and courage to say no to the devil! Jesus knew that He had to obey God's Word perfectly in order to save us and forgive us of our sins—in order to be our Savior.

God expects us to obey His Word. Obedience is important. God will keep His promises to us if we obey Him. And God's plan will be done as we are obedient to Him. Joshua and Jesus both knew God's Word, believed God's Word, and obeyed God's Word. God's Word helped them to overcome very difficult situations, and God perfectly accomplished His will through them.

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Did you know that Joshua only had the first five books of the Bible to read and obey? And while Jesus lived, He studied the Scriptures of the Old Testament—that is the beginning of the Bible—the first 39 books. Well, we have ALL 66 books! God has given us His entire Word in the Old and New Testaments. We can get to know God by reading His Word, studying it, and memorizing it. The Bible gives us everything we need to obey God and have strength and courage every day.



MEMORY VERSE

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for who He is—our Father who wants what is best for us.
- Thank God for the way He has revealed His will to us in His holy Word.
- Pray that the students will desire to know God's Word well so they can be strong in the Lord like Joshua, even when obedience is difficult.