

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL

JOSHUA 23-24



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 24:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Joshua reminded the people that God saved them from Egypt and gave them the Promised Land. He told them to worship God alone. Jesus is worthy of all worship because He saves those who trust in Him from sin and gives them eternal life.

STORY POINT: Joshua reminded the Israelites to worship and obey God.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The book of Joshua ends with a farewell address to God’s people about 20 years after they first found rest in the Promised Land. Joshua took one last opportunity to challenge the people to continue following the Lord and remind them how they were called to live in view of what God had already accomplished on their behalf.

What did Joshua commission the Israelites to do in his farewell address? How does this parallel with how Christ followers should live today?

Joshua spent his last moments on earth reminding the Israelites of the grace God had shown them by giving them the land He promised to Abraham long ago. Joshua led them through the history of their people, through the patriarchs and battles that brought them to the land. He also impressed upon them the truth that God’s promise to bless them had been fulfilled, but the rest they were experiencing in the land was contingent upon their covenant loyalty to worship God alone.

The Israelites were commissioned to get rid of the foreign gods that were among them and turn their hearts to the Lord (Joshua 24:23). We, like the Israelites, are called to lead lives of obedient worship, turning away from idols in our midst. By the grace of God, we can have hearts that desire to follow His commands through faith-filled obedience as we live through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lead boys and girls to see the awe-inspiring deliverance God extends to the people He has sworn to provide for—those who place their faith in His Son. Help kids see that God’s greatest act of love is found in Jesus, whose sacrifice atoned for the sins of His people long ago and for us today. Ask the Lord to instill upon the children in your class a deep desire to know and worship Him in light of the promise of eternal life in Christ’s presence.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

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

- "What's Different?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- poster
- various pictures, 10–20

Session Starter (Option 2)

- sticky notes, 40



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- "Faithful Foundation" printable, 1 per kid

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- index cards, 5–10 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Search It" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Joshua's Farewell" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 7, Session 5" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "South Asian Peoples" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "Who Is (Psalm 24:8)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- dry erase board and marker
- dry eraser



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 “When you are given a list of things to do, like chores, do you sometimes forget what you need to do? What makes you forget? What might help you remember in the future?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What’s Different?” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will see how the Israelites’ future was going to look a little different as Joshua would no longer be their leader.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: CAN YOU REMEMBER?

Before the session, create a poster collage of 10–20 pictures of various items. Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with three pieces of paper and a pencil. Explain that you will hold up the poster for 5 seconds while they study the pictures. After you hide the poster, challenge groups to write down as many items as they can remember from the poster. Invite groups to share how many items they remembered. Then repeat twice more, adding five more seconds each time. Direct kids to throw their first paper away and begin fresh with a new paper. After each round, see how many items each group remembered. The goal is to remember more items each time.

SAY “Today, we will learn how Joshua challenged the Israelites to remember all God had done for them. **JOSHUA REMINDED THE ISRAELITES TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD.** We’ll see that we need to be reminded of all God has done for us. The more time we spend in God’s Word, the more we will remember God’s actions, character, and promises.”

OPTION 2: FIND THE LETTERS



Before the session, gather five Bibles and eight sticky notes for each Bible. On each sticky note write one of the letters from the word FAITHFUL. Place sticky notes in the Bibles by each of the following Bible references: Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 13:5; Psalm 63:3; Isaiah 25:1; Lamentations 3:23; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

Form kids into five groups and provide each group with one of the Bibles. Call out one of the Bible references and tell kids to find the verse, read it aloud, and remove the sticky note. Repeat until every sticky note has been found. Then challenge kids to use the letters on the sticky notes to spell out the word FAITHFUL.

SAY “Each Bible verse was about God’s faithfulness. Today, we will learn how Joshua reminded the Israelites about God’s faithfulness and called them to be faithful to worship God. However, even when people fail to be faithful, God never does. **We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.**”

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





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 “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I am so glad you are here. Today, we will hear about Joshua’s final message to God’s people. We’ll see that Joshua was growing old and would soon die. But before his death, **JOSHUA REMINDED THE ISRAELITES TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD.** [Display the Story Point Poster.]

If you have your Bibles with you, please take them out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let’s prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word. Pray with me: ‘Dear God, please help us see Your faithfulness in our story. Help us be reminded that You alone are worthy of worship. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Let’s say our big picture question: **Why can we trust God?** What’s the answer we have learned? [Allow responses.] **We can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.**

In our story today, Joshua reminded the Israelites of God’s faithfulness by thinking back on all God had done for His people. Joshua recalled the promises God made and how He was faithful to keep His promises. Everything God did was for His glory to be known to all people, and He always acted for the good of His people. If we have trusted in Jesus, we can know that God will always be faithful to us and also works for our good. Every promise God made finds its fulfillment in Jesus. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God promised to bless Abraham, make his family into a great nation, and give him land (Genesis 12:2-3, 7). God gave Abraham a son—Isaac— and his family grew. Abraham’s family, the Israelites, faced many trials and sinned against God, but God performed many miracles and fought for His people. As the great nation of Israel entered the Promised Land, they continued to face trials, but God was with them and blessed them. Finally the land was theirs, just like God promised, and He gave them rest from war. Today, we will learn how Joshua gave a final speech before his death and reminded the Israelites to worship and obey God in the new land. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Joshua 23–24. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Joshua’s Farewell.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JOSHUA’S FAREWELL

“Many years had passed since the Lord gave His people rest from war. Joshua was now an old man. He made a speech to the leaders of the people.

Joshua said, “You have seen for yourselves everything the LORD did for you. He fought for you and gave you the land He promised. Be very strong and continue obeying all of God’s laws. Do not worship the gods of the other nations. Instead, be loyal to the LORD your God.

“If you turn away from the LORD and begin serving the gods of the other nations, know for certain that God will not fight for you. The good promises God has made to you have all come true. So, do not worship other gods or you will not remain in the land God has given you.”

Then, **Joshua called all the people of Israel together. He reported God’s words, saying, “Long ago, I called Abraham to leave his home and the gods he worshiped and to follow Me. Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac had Jacob and Esau. Jacob and his sons went to Egypt, where your ancestors were put into slavery.**

“Then I sent Moses and Aaron and defeated Egypt by sending the plagues, and My people were free. When it looked like the army of Egypt was about to capture my people again, I brought the Red Sea down on them to destroy them. After that, I led the people in the wilderness for a long time.

“Then I took you across the Jordan River. I fought for you and gave you victory in every battle. I gave you land you did not work for, cities you did not build, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant.

Joshua then said, “Therefore, fear the LORD and worship Him alone. You must choose for yourselves who will you worship: The LORD your God or false gods. As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD.”

The people replied, “We will not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! He brought us up out of slavery in Egypt and performed great miracles to save us. He protected us and defeated armies for us. We will worship the LORD, because He is our God.”

Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried in the land God had promised to His people.

Christ Connection: Joshua reminded the people that God saved them from Egypt

STORYTELLING TIPS

Ask it: After you describe each event, ask kids “Who did it?” Then invite them to answer, “God did.” Remind kids that God is faithful, and He alone called people to Himself, gave them freedom, and accomplished victories.

Vary your volume: Vary your volume through different parts of the story. Loud volume can suddenly grab attention, and soft (yet intense) volume helps draw kids’ focus.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

and gave them the Promised Land. He told them to worship God alone. Jesus is worthy of all worship because He saves those who trust in Him from sin and gives them eternal life. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God had helped Joshua be a faithful leader to the Israelites. But Joshua grew old and would soon die. The Israelites had worshiped God throughout Joshua’s lifetime (Joshua 24:31), but now they were living in a land where the surrounding people worshiped many false gods. So before his death, **JOSHUA REMINDED THE ISRAELITES TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD.** How was Israel to obey God? Look at Joshua 23:6-8. [Choose a volunteer to read Joshua 23:6-8 aloud.] Joshua told the people to obey all that was written in God’s law. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. These books reminded the people of all God had done, recounted God’s promises, and guided God’s people to live holy lives for His glory. Today, we have the whole Bible to help us know God, live for Him, and see the big story of salvation through Jesus.

Joshua reminded the Israelites of all God had done for them. What were some of the events Joshua reviewed? [Allow responses.] Joshua recalled God’s faithfulness from the call of Abraham to the fulfillment of God’s promise to give Israel the Promised Land. God showed His glory through miracles, His faithfulness through promises kept, and His goodness through how He fought for His people. God is worthy of our worship and obedience because He alone is perfectly glorious, faithful, and good.

Finally, Joshua called the people to commit themselves to the Lord. What choice did the people make? Look at Joshua 24:15-16. [Choose a volunteer to read Joshua 24:15-16 aloud.] The people chose to worship God and not abandon Him. We have this same choice today. While we live in cultures that try to distract us from following Jesus or persuade us to worship other things, we can ask God to give us hearts that are wholly devoted to Him. Jesus is worthy of all worship because He saves those who trust in Him from sin and gives them eternal life. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Joshua called the people to be loyal to God alone. Following our own desires or the ways of the world isn’t God’s will for us. When we trust in Jesus, we are made right with God and forgiven of our sins. We desire to follow His commands. We can be reminded of His promises that keep us from wavering, knowing God is faithful and will help us follow Him (Hebrews 10:23-24). ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 7, Session 5” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What can we do when we are afraid to invite people to church?
2. How does going to church with other believers encourage us to worship God throughout the week?

**5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)**

Tell kids that South Asia has the largest concentration of non-Christians on the planet. Share that South Asia is home to more than 500 million Muslims and is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Explain that these religions do not worship the one true God and His Son, Jesus. Play the missions video to allow kids to see the different peoples and cultures of South Asia.

SAY “Aadya (Ah-DI-uh) is a South Asian woman who is telling people in her region about Jesus. Missionaries Clark and Elizabeth Atwood are training Aadya and other local church leaders to tell people about Jesus. The missionaries want the South Asian churches to start new churches.

A couple named Raahill (RA-hill) and Sadiya (Sah-DI-uh) have shared Jesus with other South Asian people who have gone on to become Christians. These new believers now meet together in groups. Clark Atwood and other missionaries support these local believers who often face difficult challenges in their country due to their belief in Jesus. Like Joshua’s encouragement to the Israelites, we can pray these new believers will follow Jesus and be reminded of God’s faithfulness.”

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 24:8 together.

SAY “No one else is worthy of our worship except God. He is faithful, mighty, and saves those who trust in His Son, Jesus.”

Write the first letter of each word of the key passage on a dry erase board. Challenge kids to use the first letter to say the key passage aloud. Practice several times. Then erase the letters and invite kids to say the key passage from memory.

Lead kids to sing “Who Is (Psalm 24:8).” 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 “Dear God, You are faithful, good, and mighty to save. You are worthy of our obedience and worship. Please help us have hearts that trust You and obey You by faith. Amen.”





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 23. Tell kids that the book of Joshua begins and ends in a similar way. In Joshua 1:7, God called Joshua to be strong and obey the whole law. Then in Joshua 23:6, Joshua told the people to be strong and obey the whole law. These two passages connect the end of the book of Joshua to the beginning, and they connect to the entirety of God's Word.

Consider pointing out the location of Canaan (F10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 23:14-16 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Joshua reminded God’s people of the Lord’s faithful promises that had already come true. God’s promises never fail, including the promise to judge sin. As we’ll later see, God’s people did not remain faithful to God. They chose to worship idols, and God judged their sin.

God has promised that anyone who trusts in Jesus will be forgiven of sin and escape God’s judgment. Believers can have confidence in knowing that even when they fail, God is still working for their good. Believers have the help of the Holy Spirit who gives them power to follow God’s commands with the desire to glorify God. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why do you think Joshua reminded the Israelites about all God had done? ”

Encourage kids to think how God’s past actions strengthen our faith. Tell kids that meditating on God’s faithfulness and His promises helps us trust Him, which then leads us to act by faith. Remind kids that God’s actions toward Israel reminded them He is the one true God and to be faithful to Him alone. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 52:8-9.)

SAY “ Why should we worship God alone? ”

Tell kids that there is no one like God. He has no equal. Worship of anything else is sin. Remind kids that God alone is holy, good, and true. Discuss how worship of other things will only disappoint us and leave us still dead in our sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 46:5-9.)

SAY “ How can we remember God’s faithfulness and obey His commands? ”

Discuss how we can read our Bibles, listen to people’s testimonies, gather in church to hear God’s Word, and even read about other Christians to remember God’s faithfulness. Share how believers obey the commands of God through the Holy Spirit. Tell kids that obedience to God’s commands doesn’t save us. Discuss how the Holy Spirit transforms our desires to turn away from sin and turn toward God’s good ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 3:16.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: FAITHFUL FOUNDATION

Provide each kid with “Faithful Foundation” printable. Guide kids to complete the house’s foundation by matching each description to a Bible reference. Then lead kids to write the words from Joshua 24:15 on the frame of the house: “As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD.”

SAY “ Joshua recalled God’s faithfulness to the Israelites by reminding them of all God had done. The promises God made to His people could be trusted. God’s actions were all working toward the promise of bringing the Savior into the world. Isaiah 28:16 reminds us that Jesus is the sure foundation. Everyone who trusts in Him will not be put to shame. Like a house built on a strong foundation, those who trust in Jesus build their lives on a firm, unshakable foundation. We trust in God’s promises and worship Him alone. ”

OPTION 2: REMIND ME



Provide each kid with 5–10 index cards. Encourage kids to write Bible verses on the cards, examples of God’s faithfulness to His people, or examples of God’s faithfulness to them. Discuss how these cards can be used as visual reminders in their homes, school planners or lockers, and even on sports equipment bags. Encourage kids to tape their cards in places where they will be visible throughout the week. Discuss how these visual reminders help us recall God’s faithfulness and encourage us to live in response to God’s faithfulness.

SAY “ **JOSHUA REMINDED THE ISRAELITES TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD.** We often need to be reminded of this as well. We easily forget all God has done and promises to do. As a result, we live in ways that are not always pleasing to God. But when we recall God’s faithfulness and all He has done for us through Jesus, we are reminded of the importance of living for His glory and walking in obedience to His commands. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for His faithfulness and for sending Jesus to die for our sins. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Search It” on the activity page.