



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Leads Us

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1; 3–4

WORD OF WONDER: From Jeremiah 32:17

Almost four years ago, God had a new direction for me in my ministry. I had been settled and comfortable where I was, but He told me it was time to move. It wasn't easy or comfortable to be uprooted from a place I had been for so long. And I wasn't even sure where He was taking me.

Just like the Israelites, I had to trust God. I didn't understand, and I didn't know what was next. So, I wandered, and I wondered, "What are you doing, Lord?"

Read Joshua 3–4 and notice God's very specific and clear directions for the Israelites. They were to put God first as they made their way to their new home. I'm sure they wondered, "What are you doing, Lord?"

Have you asked God that same question? Maybe you're asking it right now. Maybe you are wandering and wondering what is next.

Now read Joshua 1:9. God is faithful. He was faithful to His people and brought them to a land flowing with milk and honey. God was faithful to me and brought me to a place better (and different!) than I had expected. God is faithful to you.

God leads us where we may never have expected to go, and when we follow Him, He takes us to places and through seasons that are better (and different!) than any we could have planned for ourselves.

—Kristi McElheney

Children's and Parenting Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

ISRAELITES ENTER THE PROMISED LAND

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Before Moses died, he commissioned Joshua as the next leader of Israel. Joshua had been serving alongside Moses, and Joshua's faith was strong. He was one of the only two spies who believed the Israelites could conquer the promised land with God's help.

WHAT?

The miracle at the Jordan River was very similar to the miracle God performed when He brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Crossing the Red Sea was a path from slavery to freedom, and now crossing the Jordan was a path from homelessness to home.

WHERE?

The promised land, Canaan, was bordered by the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The Jordan River was part of the boundary to the east. The Israelites were at Mount Nebo, where Moses had directed them, and they crossed the Jordan into Canaan from there.

WHEN?

Approximately 40 years after the Israelites left Egypt, after an entire generation had died due to the consequence of not trusting God, a new generation was ready to enter the land that God had promised them.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

God is faithful to keep His promises. It was time to take the Israelites into the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God would show a new generation that when they trust Him to lead, He will do amazing things for them.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: blue paper (1 sheet), various colors of pipe cleaners (handful), coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Israelites Enter the Promised Land Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you prepare for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Cross the River

Set up: Put a sheet of blue paper on the table or floor. Set out a handful of pipe cleaners in various colors.

Play: Let the kids use the pipe cleaners to make their own "people" shapes. Then have them make their pretend people walk across the blue paper, which represents a river. Tell them the story for today is about people who crossed a river.

Play Station: Israelites Enter the Promised Land Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheets and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of their favorite body of water such as a lake, stream, ocean, or pool.



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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, we thank You that You are a good, wise, and perfect leader. As we explore Your big story today, help us listen well and learn what You have for us. We pray that Your Holy Spirit will make us more like You as You lead us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible Story

The Big Picture Bible, page 48

The Israelites Crossed the Jordan River

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who did God make the leader of the Israelites after Moses? (*Joshua*)
- What river did the Israelites cross to get to the promise land? (*Jordan River*)
- What did the Israelites carry into the river first? (*ark of the covenant*)
- Do you think Joshua was a good leader? Do you think God was a good leader for His people? Why?
- What did the people do to help them (and their children) remember the great things God did for them? (*They gathered stones from the river and put them in a pile.*)
- Why is it important to remember the great things God has done?
- What great things has God done in your life?
- How does God lead you?

In God's big story today, we saw how God led Joshua and all the Israelites to the land He promised them. God does what He says He will do. Through this true story, we learn that we can trust God. God leads us like He led His people long ago, and we can follow Him! Let's talk to God now in prayer.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

Nothing is too hard for God.

—from Jeremiah 32:17



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Craft: Memory Stones

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils, river stones (1–2 per kid, optional), paint pens (optional), kid-safe scissors (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Memory Stones Sheet (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print a Memory Stones Sheet for each kid.

In our story today, we learned about an amazing thing God did for His people to lead them to the promised land. Do you remember what cool thing God did? Allow the kids to respond. God led His people through the river on dry land! They used stones they gathered from the river to help them remember what He did. Have you ever gathered stones from a river or any place outside? Allow the kids to respond. Do you have anything that reminds you of something else, such as seashells or sand from a beach, or a shirt or toy from a trip? Allow the kids to respond.



We're going to make stones to help us remember the good things God has done for us. God helps us and leads us too! Let's think of a time God has helped us and led us. Tell someone about a time when God has led you or helped you. Invite the kids to share a story with someone. If they have trouble thinking of something, ask questions such as: Have you been afraid? Have you learned something? Have you been lost?

Give a sheet and coloring utensils to each kid. The kids can use scissors to cut apart the stones from their sheet if they want.

You can draw pictures on your stones to remind you of how God has helped you and led you. Then take the pictures home as a reminder that God leads you. Like the Israelites used their stones to tell other people stories of the good things God did for them, you can use your stones to tell the story to someone else. Then others can know about how God leads!





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Game: Hidden Stones

SUPPLIES: stones (12), marker (optional), scissors (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Memory Stones Sheet (optional)

Ahead of time (when the kids aren't watching), hide 12 stones (or pictures of stones from the Memory Stone Sheet) around the room.

Today we heard about God leading the Israelites through the Jordan River. After they went through the river on dry ground, 12 men picked up stones to take to the other side to build a stone tower. The stone tower helped them always remember God leading them to the promised land. Let's play a game to find a stone like the Israelites had to do when they were building the stone tower.



Invite the kids to look for the stones. You can make it less challenging by playing Hot and Cold to help them find stones. You can say "hot" when they are close to finding one and "cold" when they aren't close. To make it more difficult, you can use a marker to number the stones ahead of time and encourage the kids to find the stones in order and make a stack.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them and thank God for leading us.

God, You are the best leader! Thank You for leading and guiding us. Help us trust You and follow You. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: God rescued His people and brought them safely into the land He promised them. God will always keep His promises to you as you follow Him and let Him lead you. May God bless you and draw near to you as He leads you this week!