

Joshua in Training

(Exodus 17:8-16)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Scroll Scramble

[Teacher, cut out the back of a brown paper bag and print the word, *ADVICE*, in large letters on the piece. Crumple the paper to make it look old and worn out. Then tear it into puzzle pieces and hide them around the room before the children arrive.]

Many people like to travel to Bible lands because they want to see where the stories in the Bible actually took place. Scientists, called *archaeologists*, work at dig sites in Bible lands to discover clues about the people and the places in the Bible.

People in Bible times used to write on animal skins or a kind of paper called papyrus which is made from the reeds found in rivers. They would make long pieces that they rolled up into scrolls. Archaeologists look for these ancient scrolls. When they find them, they read what people wrote and it helps them understand the history of the people.

Often these scrolls are damaged or have fallen to pieces. Archaeologists sort the pieces and try to put them together, so they can read them. It's like assembling really hard puzzles!

[Teacher, have the children find the pieces of the "ancient scroll" you have prepared and work together to discover the word "advice."]

The word, *ADVICE*, is from Proverbs 19:20. Find this verse in your bibles. What Does Proverbs 19:20 say will happen if you listen to advice and accept instruction? (You will be wise.) Who would you ask for advice from about making new friends or about doing a hard math problem? Why would you ask this person?

Today we'll talk about people we can ask good advice from – people God gives to help us learn to love and obey Him.

Opening Prayer

Lord, thank You for putting people into our lives that teach us about You and who encourage us to follow hard after You. I pray that You will always give us the ability to know whether we've been given good advice or bad advice. Open the eyes of our understanding today; help us to be alert so that we may trust and obey You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life. (Proverbs 19:20)

Lesson

Today we begin a journey back in time. Over the next 12 weeks, we're going to learn about a famous leader named Joshua and the places he lived. Can you find Exodus 17 in your Bibles?

Get the context of Joshua's story

The Israelites had lived in the country of Egypt for hundreds of years. Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, made them work very hard as slaves. But the Israelite people wanted to be free! God chose Moses, one of the Israelites, to lead the people out of Egypt to the land God had promised to them. God did many amazing miracles to help the Israelites escape from Egypt.

Moses led this entire nation of people through the desert toward the land God had promised. It was a big job to lead thousands of people along with their sheep, goats, donkeys and cattle across the hot, dry desert! During this time, Moses chose a young man named Joshua to be his assistant. Joshua worked hard and did everything Moses told him to do.

Now, the Israelites weren't the only people in the desert. The Amalekite people lived in the desert near Rephidim (Rehf-uhd-ihm). And they were angry to see thousands and thousands of people and

animals crossing through their land! The Amalekites wanted to chase the Israelite people away!

Exodus 17:8

While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them.

Amalekite raiders attacked the Israelites. Moses turned to his assistant, Joshua and said...

Exodus 17:9

Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand."

Moses told Joshua to gather up some men and go out and fight the Amalekites. Joshua must have felt a little afraid of going into battle. He may not have had any experience fighting in battles. He was brought up as a slave in Egypt. He must have been glad to know that Moses would be up on the hill holding up the rod of God.

Moses' rod would remind Joshua of the power of God. You see, Moses used his rod many times when he was trying to convince Pharaoh to let the people go. [Teacher, recite some of the incidences such as when he threw the rod down on the ground and it became a snake, then picked it up again and it became a rod again. Or, the time he touched the Red Sea with it and the sea parted so they could escape Egypt.] Seeing Moses on the hill holding up the rod of God would help Joshua remember the power of God.

Exodus 17:10

So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill.

Moses was a great and powerful leader, but he knew that they would only win with God's help, so as Joshua led the Israelite army into

battle, Moses stood on the hill watching and praying for Joshua and the others. Do you think that it was hard for Moses to hold up the rod of God as Joshua and the men fought the Amalekites? [Teacher, have the children see how long they can keep their hands raised over their heads.] When it began to look as if the Israelite army was about to win, Moses began to relax. But, what happened when Moses lowered his rod?

Exodus 17:11

As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage.

When he saw that the Israelites were starting to lose the battle, Moses quickly raised his hands again. Moses didn't dare put his rod down again! His arms must have started aching as the battle went on for hours!

But, Moses hadn't come to the hill alone. He had brought his brother, Aaron, and Hur, his sister's husband. Aaron and Hur saw what was happening. They knew that Moses couldn't hold up his hands in prayer to God hour after hour by himself. So they decided to help Moses.

Exodus 17:12

Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

It wasn't easy for Aaron and Hur to hold up Moses' arms. Their arms must have ached after a while, too. But it was very important work—God put the outcome of the battle in Moses' hands!

As the sun was going down, finally the battle was won!

Exodus 17:13

As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

Then what did God tell Moses to do next?

Exodus 17:14

After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a permanent reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

God wanted Joshua to remember the powerful way He had helped His people win the battle with the Amalekites. So, He had Moses write it down on a scroll.

Then Moses built an altar to celebrate the victory God had given them.

Exodus 17:15

Moses built an altar there and named it Yahweh-Nissi (which means "the LORD is my banner").

Joshua would never forget the way God helped him in this battle. The scroll and the altar would be there to remind Joshua and everyone else how powerfully God had answered their prayers!

He had learned from Moses' example to love and obey God.

One of the ways God cares for us is by putting people in our lives who help us learn to love and obey God and who pray for us. Joshua learned about God from Moses. Do you have a friend who helps you know God better? Is there someone you know that encourages you to love and obey God? Loving and obeying God is something we all need to keep on learning!

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the people that you have put into our lives that teach us about You and who encourage us to love and obey You. I pray that You would help us to be good examples to our friends and to the others in our families. Help us to encourage others to remain faithful and true to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make Scrolls

Cut pieces of brown paper bags. Have the children write today's Memory Verse on it. As they work, ask them these discussion questions:

1. What does Proverbs 19:20 say will happen if you listen to advice and accept instructions? (You will be wise.)
2. Who are some people who give advice or instructions to kids your age? (Parents, teachers, friends, people on television.)
3. How do you decide whether the advice you're getting is good or bad? (Pray and ask God whether or not it makes sense. Then, ask someone you trust for their opinion.)
4. When has someone given you some advice or instructions that helped you learn more about God? What did that person say?
5. Have you ever gotten bad advice? How did you know it wasn't good advice?

When the children have the verse written out, have them crumble them up to make them look old. Then have them roll up their scrolls to take home.

Game Center

Use the following discussion questions to help reinforce the lesson objectives:

1. How did Joshua listen to advice and accept instructions? (He did what Moses asked him to do in the battle against the Amalekites; he listened to instructions and obeyed and he saw the power of God!)
2. What did Moses do to help Joshua remember the power of God? (Prayed. Wrote down what God did so that no one would forget. Built an altar as a reminder of God's power.)
3. When have you seen someone show that he or she loved and obeyed God? What did this person do? How could you show that you love God at home? At school?
4. Who helps you love and obey God?
5. What have your parents said or done that has helped you learn about God? How can you learn about God from your friends? From others?
6. What can make it hard for a kid your age to learn about God? (Friends don't want to learn. Too busy to read Bible.) What can other people do to help kids your age learn about God?

Sword Drills

1. Read **1 Samuel 3:1-10**. What advice did Eli give Samuel? What leader has helped you hear God's voice by helping you read and understand God's Word?
2. Read **Luke 11:1-4**. What did Jesus teach His disciples to do? What have you learned about prayer? Who taught you?

3. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:12-18**. Paul wrote these words to the people at the church in Thessalonica. What did Paul tell them to do? What can you do to obey these verses and show love to God?