

No Fear for Joshua

(Numbers 27:15-23; Deuteronomy 31:1-8; 34:1-12)

Introduction

What does it mean to show courage? (To do what is right even when it is hard or we feel afraid.) When have you seen someone show courage? (When someone got hurt.) When are sometimes children your age need courage? (Going to the dentist. Performing in a talent show. When you hear mom and dad arguing.)

[Teacher, ask the children the following questions and write their answers on individual pieces of construction paper. You will use these squares as game board pieces in the review game activity after the lesson.]

What are some words that make you think of courage? (“Brave.” “Strong.” “Honor.” “Confident.”) What are some times when you might need God’s promise of courage? (Going to a new school. Waiting for parents who are late. Being made fun of or picked on. Taking a test. Seeing a hurt friend. Going to camp. Admitting to a sin.)

We can have courage when we feel afraid or face hard situations. Today we’re going to discover how we can find courage when we need it.

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to always be brave and strong and courageous. But there are times that we do get afraid. Today, I pray, that You will help us to learn what to do when we get into scary situations. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified...for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.
(Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV)

Lesson

Moses had been leading the people through the hot, dry desert for 40 years. At last, the time they’d talked about, dreamed about, and waited for had come! They were going into the land God had promised to them!

Turn to Deuteronomy 31 in your Bibles.

Moses had to tell the people that he would not be going with them into the Promised Land. So, he gathered everyone together and began to speak...

Deuteronomy 31:1-2

When Moses had finished giving these instructions to all the people of Israel, he said, “I am now 120 years old, and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has told me, ‘You will not cross the Jordan River.’”

How do you think the Israelites must have felt when they heard that Moses would not go into the Promised Land with them? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Moses assured the people they will not be left alone...

Deuteronomy 31:3

But the LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua will lead you across the river, just as the LORD promised.

Moses explained that God Himself would go into the new land ahead of them and would protect them. And then he announced that God had chosen Joshua to be their new leader.

Joshua had been Moses’ obedient helper for a long, long time. When the Amalekites had attacked the Israelites, Joshua was the man who led the new army. During the battle with the Amalekites, Joshua had carefully followed the instructions God gave to Moses and had bravely led the Israelite army to victory.

Joshua had also been one of the spies sent out on the famous spying mission 40 years earlier. Even though 10 of the others spies were afraid, Joshua showed courage. He and his friend Caleb did what was right and encouraged the people to believe God's promise to bring them safely into the land.

So, Moses encourages the people to be strong and courageous.

Deuteronomy 31:6

So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.

Through the years as Moses' helper, Joshua experienced many battles and all kinds of adventures. God used these experiences to prepare Joshua to be the leader of the Israelites. Because he worked closely with Moses, Joshua was able to watch what Moses did and listen to what Moses said. It was the perfect training and Joshua was the perfect man for the job!

It is important to understand that God did not choose Joshua because he was already a strong leader. Joshua became a strong leader because he had confidence in God. Joshua believed God when He said He would never leave him or forsake him!

That same God who commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous is with us, too! We can have confidence in God, just like Joshua did, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in.

Joshua must have felt excited and scared! This was a big responsibility to be the leader of the Israelites. So, Moses laid his hands on Joshua and encouraged him to be strong and courageous, too.

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, "Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors he would give them. You are the

one who will divide it among them as their grants of land. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."

Why do you think Joshua would need to have courage as the leader of the Israelites? [Teacher, explain that the Promised Land was not sitting empty while the children of Israel were down in Egypt for 400 years. The land was occupied by people not willing to give it up easily; there would be enemies to face and battles to fight.]

Joshua knew God had helped Moses be a good leader. It must have made him feel happy to know that God would be with him and would help him, too!

Moses' work was finished. But before God took him to heaven, He let Moses see the Promised Land from the top of Mount Nebo.

Deuteronomy 34:1

Then Moses went up to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan.

Moses climbed to the top of Mount Nebo and God showed him the Promised Land the Israelites would soon conquer.

Deuteronomy 34:4

Then the LORD said to Moses, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have now allowed you to see it with your own eyes, but you will not enter the land."

Then somewhere on that mountain, Moses died.

Deuteronomy 34:5

So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, just as the LORD had said.

God buried his body. No one knows where.

Then for 30 days, the people who had followed Moses all those years wept and were sad.

Deuteronomy 34:8

The people of Israel mourned for Moses on the plains of Moab for thirty days, until the customary period of mourning was over.

And, Joshua became the new leader.

Deuteronomy 34:9

Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him, doing just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The people knew what a good man Joshua was and how hard he had worked as Moses' helper. The Israelites knew that God was still with them. And they knew God had chosen Joshua to be their new leader! Now, the Israelites were ready to go into the new land God had promised to them and to do what He had commanded.

We can have confidence in God's love and promises just like Joshua and the Israelites did. No matter what happens at home or school or what may happen in the future, we can trust God and act with courage. We can act with courage because we know that God will always be with us and help us. And we can always ask Him to help us be courageous when we feel afraid.

Closing Prayer

Father, it is so wonderful to know that You are always with us. It gives us courage to face the scary times in our lives. I pray that You would help us to grow in our faith in You so that we will never forget that You promise to always be with us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Choose one of the following activities to help your students connect the Bible truth they have been studying with their day-to-day experiences.

Faith Hop

Materials needed:

- Squares made during the opening activity
- One dice

Procedures:

- Lay the squares out Hop-Scotch style in a trail on the floor through the class room. Or, set 12 squares on a table in a 3 x 4 grid.
- Have each student roll the dice and either hop (without shoes) that number of squares on the trail, or move a game marker on the table grid.
- Have the student read what is written on the square he or she lands on.
- Have the student use that word or phrase in a sentence. [Teacher, lead the children to make statements of faith as they form their sentences. The goal is to have the children give examples of times they need to be courageous and have confidence in God's love.]

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. How did God help Joshua and the Israelites have confidence in Him?
2. What is the promise to Joshua and the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31:6? (God will be with them. God will never leave them.) This promise is for everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus, too. How could this promise help a child your age feel brave? (God will be with anyone who asks for His help.)
3. What are some reasons to have confidence in, or trust in God's love? (God promised to always be with us. God always keeps His promises.)
4. What things has God done to show His love for all of us? (God gave us the Bible. God sent His Son, Jesus, to make a way for us to live forever with Him.) What are some ways God has helped you or someone you know?
5. When are some times a child your age might want to ask God for courage?
6. How might knowing about God's love and His promise in Deuteronomy 31:6 help a child your age in a hard or scary situation?

Sword Drills

1. Read **Deuteronomy 31:6**. What is the promise in this verse? How does God's love and care help you to be strong and courageous at school? in your neighborhood?
2. Read **Psalms 145:8-9, 17**. What do these verses tell us about God? What word means to care for and help someone?

3. Read **1 John 4:10**. What is the definition of love in this verse? How did God show His love to us through Jesus' death on the cross?

Memory Verse Option

Write 2-3 words of Deut 31:6 onto individual paper plates. Mix up the plates and place them on the floor. From about 5' away, have each student take a turn tossing a marker (candy, button, or coin) onto a plate. If a child gets the marker on a plate, he picks up the plate and puts it to the side in the right order.

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