

Joshua Gets Ready to Lead

(Joshua 1)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Opening Discussion

How many of you have gone on a guided tour or on a hike into an area you've never been before? Did you go with someone who had been there before? Was it good that someone led you? Would you have gotten lost without your guide? Did you take a map? Would you have seen everything that was important to see?

A guide is something or someone that leads others in the right direction. Who or what helps guide you in life? (Parents, teachers, maps, etc.)

Line Leader

Students play a game similar to *Follow the Leader*. Students stand in a single line. The first student in line is the leader. The leader stays in one place and begins with a motion (moves legs, moves arms, bends to the side, etc.) The second student follows the leader; the third student follows the second; and so on. There will be a ripple effect similar to the wave performed at a sporting event. (See diagram.)



After several motions have been successfully completed, have the children sit down. Talk about the fact that the

“Wave” or ripple effect would not have happened if the followers didn’t do what the leader wanted them to do.

In the same way God’s Word leads us along the path of life. Only when we do what God’s Word tells us to do, will we be successful in life. Can you name something God’s Word teaches us to do?

Today we’re going to talk about the very best Guide and why it’s always good to know what it says in our life’s Guide Book, the Bible.

Opening Prayer

Father, we know that You are our leader; we want to be good followers. Give us good listening ears this morning so that we might hear Your voice in our hearts. We want to learn the lesson that You have for us today here at Sunday school. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Teach me your decrees, O LORD; I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart. (Psalms 119:33-34 NLT)

Lesson

Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. He was their faithful and beloved leader for 40 years as they traveled through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. But just as they were getting ready to cross over the Jordan River and enter the land, Moses died and Joshua became the next leader.

Joshua 1:1-3

After the death of Moses the LORD’s servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ assistant. He said, “Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am

giving them. I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—

Joshua had been getting ready for his new job as leader of Israel for a long time. He'd helped Moses for many years. He'd learned how to trust God as he watched Moses lead the people through all kinds of situations. Now he was the leader.

It was a big job for Joshua, but he was well trained and best of all God had reassured him that He would never be alone.

Joshua 1:5

No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

Then the Lord gave Joshua some good instructions for success that we need to pay attention to as well.

Joshua 1:7

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.

First God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous because the task ahead of him would not be easy. 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 many enemies to face and battles to fight. They needed to remember to believe and trust in God.

The second thing God tells Joshua to do is to be obedient to everything Moses wrote down. At this time the children of Israel only had the first five books of the Bible. We call them the Books of Moses because Moses had written them. They are also called "The Law" because they had all the instructions God had given Moses, including

the Ten Commandments. God tells Joshua to do everything that is in the books of Moses.

Joshua 1:8

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

God reminded Joshua to be very careful to obey all of His commands so that he would be successful in all that he did. He was to constantly read and study God's Word.

Then God encourages Joshua once again...

Joshua 1:9

This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

Why do you think that Joshua needed to be reminded over and over again to be strong and of good courage? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Here they were on the East side of the Jordan River. It was spring time and the river was swift and swollen. They knew they had to get over to the other side to enter the Promised Land. The people may have wondered how they would ever make it across – it was fast enough to sweep them away! They had often heard the story of how God had parted the water in the Red Sea many years before. But was this river too deep and swift?

Joshua calls his officers together to give his orders to the children of Israel.

Joshua 1:11

"Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you."

As the officers scattered to spread the news I can just imagine all the thousands and thousands of people getting ready to go across the raging river. There must have been people chasing down their grazing sheep and goats, sorting and packing their belongings and mending tents. Donkeys braying and snorting as burdens and bundles were tied onto their backs.

But in the midst of all this excitement, the people listened to Joshua and promised to obey him.

Joshua 1:16

They answered Joshua, "We will do whatever you command us, and we will go wherever you send us."

The people promised to listen and obey all that Joshua asked them to do. I'm sure that gave Joshua all the confidence he needed to lead the children of Israel across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.

The Israelites needed a good strong leader who was following the Lord. Can you imagine the chaos if they had been left without guidance? And Joshua needed obedient followers to successfully lead the people into the Land.

We need guidance in life, too. Fortunately God has not left us on our own to figure out what to do and where to go all by ourselves.

Our Guide is Jesus and our Guide Book is the Bible. God has given us some guidelines in His Word for success. But He needs us to be obedient followers.

#1 we are to **be strong and courageous**. Jesus said He was the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). If we follow Him we will never be led astray in life.

#2 we are to **obey God's Word**. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness in His Word. (2 Peter 1:3). It is our Guidebook for life, like a map. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. "

#3 we are to **read and study God's Word**. If we are to obey God's Word, then we must know what it says. So, we must take time to read it and think about what it says. What good would it do to take a map with you on a hike and then never look at it?

Jesus is our Guide; we are to follow His example in life. And, God's Word is the best Guide Book we can ever have. Reading and thinking about the Bible helps us know how to live and will give us courage to live the way God wants us to live.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that you haven't left us wondering what to do in life to please You. Thank You that You have given us Your Word, the Bible. Give us a love for it and a desire to read it, understand it, and to follow it all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Guided Drawing

- Make simple line drawings of the following objects on separate index cards: house, star, flower, tree, sun, etc.
- Have one child go to the white board and without showing the card or naming the object, guide the "artist" with simple directions. For example: "Draw a straight line." "Draw a circle on the top of the line," and so forth.
- When you have finished giving directions, let the class and the "artist" see the picture drawn on the card and ask, "How much did the drawing look like the picture on the card?"

After you do the first one, let the children take turns being the "Guide" and the "Artist."

Help the children discover how important it is to listen to instructions and to do exactly what they are told.

Game Center

Guiding the Blind

Let kids create an obstacle course using tables, chairs, inner tubes, scraps of lumber, a clothesline, and anything else you have on hand. Have kids form pairs. Have one partner wear a blindfold as the other partner guides him or her through the obstacle course. Then have partners trade roles. Compare relying on partners to relying on God. Explain that because God is all-powerful, when we trust in him we can always be strong and courageous.

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

1. In today's Bible story, God's Word helped Joshua get ready to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. What did God do to help Joshua be a good leader? (God gave instructions and promises to help Joshua.)
2. What are some of the instructions God gave to Joshua? Which of these instructions can we follow today?
3. What did the person who wrote Psalm 119:33-34 ask God to do? What did the writer say he would do? What is a way you can show you want to depend on God's Word? (Read the Bible. Ask questions about the verse you read. Ask God to help you. Obey the commands in the Bible verse you read.)
4. What are some things children your age depend on for guidance? (Parents, Maps, Friends, Teachers, Computers.) Why do you think a child your age might depend on God's Word to guide him or her?

5. What are some ways that God's Word has helped you or someone you know?
6. Why do you think it is important to read and think about God's Word?
7. When are some times that you might need God's Word to guide you? (When a friend hurts your feelings. When you feel afraid. When you want to tell a lie. When you feel all alone.)

Sword Drills

1. Read **Psalm 25:4-5**. When do you need help knowing what to do? How can reading God's Word guide you? Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word.
2. Read **Psalm 119:72-73**. How do these verses describe God's Word? Why are God's words so valuable? According to verse 73, why can we trust that God's commands are best for us?
3. Read **Psalm 119:97-98**. How does the writer of this psalm show that He loves God's Word? (To meditate means to read and think about.) How can you show that you love God's Word?