

The Promised Land

Teacher Pep Talk: After 40 years wandering in the Wilderness for their disobedience and lack of faith in God, now the Israelites were ready to enter the Promised Land. There was just the Jordan River to cross. Just like He parted the Red Sea, God would part the Jordan River. Once again the Israelites would walk through on dry land. Moses would see the Promised Land from a mountaintop, but would not cross over into it. Joshua would lead the people into the Promised Land.

You will need: Bible
Other items depending on the activities chosen

Major Points: The Israelites Had Disobeyed God in the Wilderness
Moses Would See the Promised Land, but Not Go In
Joshua Would Lead the People Now
God Parted the Jordan River
Twelve Stones were Taken from the River Bed
The Israelites Crossed Over on Dry Ground

Scripture Ref: Deuteronomy 31 – Joshua 4.

Memory Verse: Deut. 31:3 *The LORD ...will cross over ahead of you.*

Lesson:

The Israelites Had Disobeyed God in the Wilderness

- *[Be sure to start with your Bible sitting on your lap.]*
- *[Review the Timeline in the classroom, if available.]*
- While on their way to the Promised Land, the Israelites had disobeyed God... Not once... Not twice... but LOTS of times!
- So, God made them wait for 40 years in the Wilderness before going into the Promised Land (sort of like “time out” for adults.)
- During those years, all the adults, who had disobeyed God, died
- Now their children were all grown up
- It was these children who would now enter the Promised Land

Moses Would See the Promised Land, but Not Go In

- Moses had gotten older too!
- When they left Egypt, Moses was 80, and they had been in the Wilderness for 40 years! So, now how old was he? (120)
- Wow! 120! That’s really old! I hope I live that long! Would you want to live that long? What do you think you would you look if you were 120 years old? *(Wait for some answers.)*
- God said that Moses would not enter the Promised Land

- *[You see, once while they were in the Wilderness, Moses had disobeyed God too! Because he had disobeyed, God said that Moses would NOT enter into the Promised Land.]*
- But God, who is always good, allowed Moses to see it
- Before Moses died, God had Moses come to the top of a mountain where He showed Moses all of the Promised Land
- How do you think Moses felt when he saw it? *(Happy, relieved, or maybe even a little sad...because he wouldn't go in)*
- After Moses saw the Promised Land, he died there on the mountain, and the Bible says that God, Himself, buried Moses.

Joshua Would lead the People Now

- So Moses wasn't going to go into the Promised Land
- Who was going to lead the people?
- Joshua, Moses' helper, would lead the people now
- Joshua would lead the people into the Promised Land

God Parted the Jordan River

- There was one more river to cross: the Jordan River
- It was the last thing separating them from the Promised Land
- On the night before they were to cross over, God sent an east wind to blow... *(Can you blow out air, like when you blow out a candle? Let's all blow like the strong east wind. Good job!)*
- God sent an east wind to blow that stopped the water from running down the river (as far upstream as the town of Adam)
- The Israelites walked across on dry land
- *Remember when they walked across the Red Sea on dry land?*

Twelve Stones were Taken from the River Bed

- It had been a very BIG, important day!
- That night was to be their first night in the Promised Land!
- God wanted them to have something to remember this by
- God instructed the Israelites to take 12 BIG stones (one for each of the tribes of Israel) out of the center of the river bed
- They were to pile up the stones there where they camped that night on the new side of the river
- The pile of stones was to stay there to remind the people and their children of what God had done for His people!

The Israelites Crossed Into the Promised Land

- So, God parted the Jordan River and the Israelites went across on dry land
- It had been 40 years since they had left Egypt
- Now... finally, the Israelites were home in the Promised Land!
- God had kept His promises to His people!

Let's pray and thank God for always keeping His promises!

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you for always keeping your promises.
You kept your promises to your people, the Israelites.
Thank you for keeping your promises to us too.
Thank you for loving us.
We love you back.
Amen.

Suggested Activities: *(Choose 1-2 that you think will work well with your group.)*

Balloon Toss Over – *A GREAT game to play together with balloons.*

Before Class: Obtain several balloons, preferably one or more per child in your class. Bring masking tape to class to place a line down the middle of the floor. Clear an area in your room to play. (Remove desks and chairs.) Blow up all of the balloons and store.
During Class: Show the children the taped line in the center of the play area. Put half the children on one side of the line and the other children on the other side. Distribute the balloons, or place them all near the line. Tell the children, "When I say 'GO' I want you to throw all of the balloons on your side to the other side of the line. But don't cross the line! One, two, three, GO!" (The children from both teams will try to put all of the balloons on the other side of the line.) Let this go on for a minute or two, then stop the game. Redistribute the balloons. Play again. *(NOTE: This is really fun! But be safe!)*

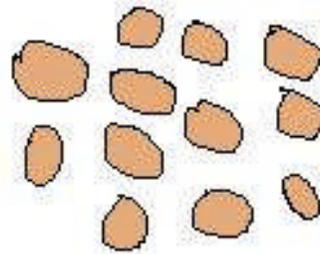
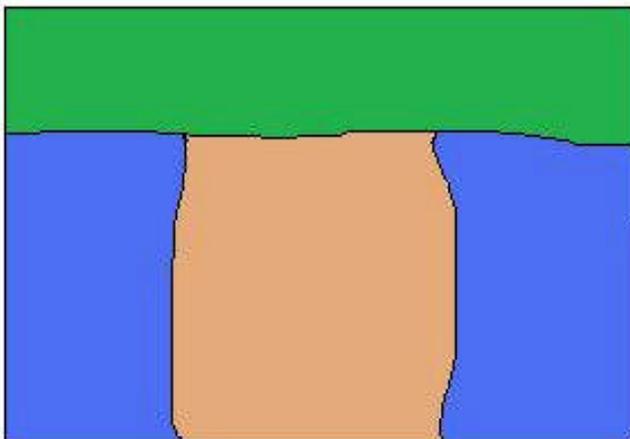
Big Picture Idea: 12 Stones from the River – *Recreate the Jordan River crossing.*

Before Class: Obtain at least 12 brown paper sacks (grocery sacks). You will need something light to put inside the bags. For example: Polyester batting, crumpled newspaper, or crumpled paper sacks. Also provide wide masking tape or packaging tape as well as black or brown markers. You may also want to bring in one or more blue sheets or large pieces of blue fabric. NOTE: If you will have time during class to mark on the outside of the unfilled bags with markers, then allow the children to do that. If you don't think you will have time in class, mark on the bags yourself, before class.
During Class: If time permits, allow the children to mark on the outside of the unfilled bags with markers, making them look more like rocks. With the children's help, fill the bags with some of the materials as listed above. Seal each bag with tape – forming the 12 "stones." Mark off the banks of the river on the floor with tape, and put the 12 stones between them, like they are in the river. Put the blue sheets over the top of the stones. When everything is ready, remove the sheets, saying, "When it was time, God stopped the flowing of the Jordan River as far back as the town of Adam. Then the children of Israel walked into the Promised Land on dry ground." Remind the children that at God's command the Israelites took 12 stones from the center of the river (one for each of the tribes of Israel) and carried them to the other side of the river with them. There they piled them high so that they would serve as a reminder that this miracle had actually happened. Have the class walk across the "dry" river bed. Now go back and carry the 12 stones to the other side of the river. Pile them high there in the Promised Land.

Create A River – *The children will create a small version of the Jordan River crossing.*

Before Class: Obtain several large sheets of green, brown and blue construction paper. Cut as needed to provide each child with enough materials. You may also choose to have some brown paper bags of differing colors. Also provide scissors, tape and glue.

During Class: Each child starts with a sheet of blue construction paper, representing the Jordan River. Tear or cut a rectangular piece of brown paper to place down the center of the blue construction paper, going from one side to the other. This represents the path God provided through the river. Glue or tape the brown piece of paper in place. Now cut or tear a section of green construction paper and glue or tape it across the page, representing the Promised Land. Use another sheet of brown paper, or brown paper bags, to tear out 12 “stones” to tape in the center of the dry path crossing the river. Put them in the center of the path in the river on your paper. [NOTE: If you wad up the paper stones, they will look more like stones.] Now you can take the stones out of the river bed and move them on to the green area representing the Promised Land. Practice stacking up the stones. Use tape as you like. You might want to have some small paper bags or plastic bags for the children to take their stones home with.



Home, Sweet Home – *The children will make “sampler” for their wall at home.*

Before Class: Provide a copy of the activity sheet for each child in class. Also provide crayons, markers, etc. You may opt to use other decorative items to create a sampler-like effect; things such as rickrack, doilies, or yarn. If so, also provide scissors and glue.

During Class: Using the activity sheet (either as a coloring sheet or as an example for your own project) help the children create a “sampler” for a wall hanging at home. You may choose to write the words on construction paper and then glue yarn or rickrack around the words. For fun, glue your artwork to a rectangle of slightly larger brown construction paper, giving it the appearance of being framed.



Home,

Sweet Home