

Crossing the Jordan

UNIT
7
LESSON
2

Bible Reference

Joshua 3–4

To the Teacher

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River on dry ground: the waters parted in a manner similar to the Red Sea crossing. God was with Joshua just as he had been with Moses. Have the class participate in the story by pantomiming the events as you tell them.

Preparation/Materials

- * Twelve stones
- * Small stone with the words “We will serve the Lord” written in permanent marker, one per student

Lesson Highlights

- * The Israelites crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.
- * The Israelites set up 12 stones as a monument.
- * God kept his promise to his people and to Joshua.

Background

In the spring, seasonal rains and Mount Hebron’s melting snow cause the Jordan River to swell to a mile wide and up to 12 feet deep. While strong men were sometimes able to

cross the river, at that time and place it would have been impossible for a baggage caravan and priests carrying the ark to make the trip without divine intervention. God stopped the river about 20 miles (32 km) upstream, and the tribes of Israel made a memorable passage over dry land into Canaan.

This was a significant event in the history of God’s people, comparable to the crossing of the Red Sea. By allowing this miraculous crossing, God showed the Israelites and the Canaanites that he was the almighty God, ruler of the waters. The stones at Gilgal reminded generations to come of God’s mighty act at the Jordan River. Twelve uncut and unpolished stones, each small enough to be carried by one man, were set up to represent the twelve tribes and the providence that brought them safely to the new land.

At Gilgal the Israelites observed two ceremonies: circumcision and the Passover. (The Israelites who left Egypt had been circumcised, but those born in the wilderness had not.) Now Israel was consecrated to God and ready to fight for possession of the land.

Now that the people were in their new land, the gift of manna ceased. Its cessation marked another change in the Israelites’ way of life. Bread from heaven was no longer necessary in this agricultural setting.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Tell students that they are going to help you act out today’s story as you tell it. They must do exactly as you say, and they shouldn’t talk unless you give them lines to recite.

2. Tell students that the ark would be carried in front of the Israelites as they traveled. Assign twelve students to carry stones, one student to play the role of Joshua, and the rest of the students to be Israelites. If you have a small class, adjust the numbers so that priests, stone carriers, Joshua, and the Israelites are all represented.
3. Set aside a place in the room to be the Jordan River. Assemble students on one side. Joshua should lead, followed by the priests and the rest of the people.



Scripture Link

1. Use the following story starter.

When Joshua instructed the Israelites to get ready to cross the Jordan River so they could enter Canaan the next morning, they must have been excited. Some were probably so excited that they hardly slept. Morning came, and the Israelites looked at the river. Rains had caused the river to overflow its banks, and the water was flowing fast! How would they get across?

2. Use the following outline to tell the story. Have the students pantomime the parts as you tell them.
 - Water stopped flowing and piled up in a heap when the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the water (Joshua 3:14–16).
 - The priests with the ark stood in the middle (3:17).
 - Twelve men each took a stone from the middle of the river and made a memorial at the new camp. The stones set up on a pile were to remind the Israelites of what God did for them that day, to remind them of God's power (4:1–9).
 - At God's command the priests carrying the ark came out of the river, and the water flowed once more (4:15–18).
3. Tell students that the Israelites celebrated the Passover in the land of Canaan. Manna no longer appeared because the people didn't need it in Canaan.

Student Activities

1. Introduce students to the memory work for this unit: "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15b).
2. Give each student one of the stones with the words "We will serve the Lord" written on them.
3. Ask students, "What are some ways in which we can serve the Lord?" (Answers include by obeying the Ten Commandments, by caring for others, or by being kind.)

4. Remind students of the memorial the Israelites erected to remind them of what God had done for them. Have students take their stones and erect a monument in the corner of the room to remind them to serve the Lord.
5. Have students take a stone home at the end of the day or at the end of the lesson that they can place in their room to remind them that “We will serve the Lord.”

Enrichment

- * **Art.** Have students draw pictures of the monument by the Jordan River.
- * **Bible.** Compare the Israelites’ crossing of the Jordan River with their crossing of the Red Sea.

SAMPLE

David and Goliath

UNIT
10
LESSON
2

Bible Reference

1 Samuel 17

To the Teacher

The story of David and Goliath is probably familiar to most students. They may enjoy acting out the story by using simple props. You can take two days to do this lesson and have students help you make the props. Students could also help you write the dialogue for the drama. If your time is limited, you may want to provide the simple props and tell the story yourself.

Gather the appropriate materials for the activity sheet. Students will glue objects to the picture to help them remember some of the story's key components.

Preparation/Materials

- * Cardboard and construction paper for making story props, or real props: slingshot, stones, swords, and shields
- * Activity sheet, one per student
- * Crayons
- * Glue
- * Scissors
- * Aluminum foil
- * Green construction paper, one strip per student
- * Use a hole punch to make sandpaper circles, five per student.
- * Bamboo skewer, one per student

Lesson Highlights

- * Goliath mocked God and the Israelites.
- * David knew that God would be with him as he faced Goliath.
- * God gave David and the Israelites victory over the Philistines.

Background

Goliath, who may have been a hired mercenary, stood over nine feet tall and was equipped with an impressive array of weapons and armor. Each day he hurled insults at the Israelites and challenged them to send a man to meet him in battle. It was not unusual for a champion to serve as a representative of the whole army; the victor's side would receive the other's army as subjects.

David asked some of the Israelite men what would be given to the man who defeated the giant. One replied that the victor would receive a monetary award and the king's daughter in marriage and that his father's family would no longer need to pay taxes. David's questions angered his oldest brother, Eliab. Eliab may have been ashamed that he did not trust God enough to fight Goliath or jealous that David was God's anointed.

After David killed Goliath, Goliath's head was displayed as a spoil of war and an example of what happened to those who fought God's people. Later David dedicated Goliath's sword to the Lord and gave it to the priest at Nob. David knew that God had given him the victory.

Saul asked one of his commanders, Abner, about David's lineage. Saul may have had several reasons for asking about David's family, the most obvious being that David's family would no longer have to pay taxes. Perhaps another reason was that Saul was trying to find an inherited reason for David's courage.

By defeating Goliath, David showed himself to be the kind of man that God wanted to lead his people. God wanted a man who would trust him even in the most difficult of situations. David would help to restore Israel's faith in God.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Review God's choice of a new king for Israel—David. Go over Samuel's anointing of David and David's time in Saul's palace playing the harp.
2. Review the memory work from Psalm 24.

“The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory” (Psalm 24:1–2, 7–10).



Scripture Link

OPTION 1 (HEAD)

1. Have the whole class work together to act out the story. You may wish to plan and practice one day and act it out the next. Assign parts to everyone. Many students will want to be David or Goliath; consider drawing names. The story requires the following cast members:

| | |
|---------|---------------------|
| David | Israelite soldiers |
| Goliath | Philistine soldiers |
| Saul | David's brothers |
| Jesse | Israelite women |
2. Discuss the story and what each character or group will do. Allow the class to contribute ideas. Work out the dialogue during the practice session. Emphasize God's anger at Goliath's mockery and David's acknowledgment of God's guidance.
3. Assign students to work on props (slingshot, crown, swords, shields, etc.) in groups. (To save time, provide the props rather than making them in class.)
4. Rehearse the drama. Coach students as necessary.

5. Perform the drama. You may want to invite another class to watch the performance.



OPTION 2 (HEAD)

1. Gather or make props to tell the story: slingshot, stones, swords, shields.
2. Tell the story of David and Goliath, using the props yourself or having several students use them as you tell the story.
3. Use the following to tell students the story of David and Goliath.

Let's pretend that we are at the Elah Valley with crowds of people. The Israelites, led by Saul, are on one side of the valley. On the other side are the Philistines. They have many weapons: swords and shields and spears made of strong iron. It looks like they will win the fight, doesn't it? The Israelites are afraid. If the Philistines win this fight, they might be able to beat all of the Israelites. The Israelites have to stop them from coming through the valley and to their homes.

Now the Israelites are even more upset since they see the tallest Philistine coming forward to challenge them. His name is Goliath. He wears a helmet of bronze, and he is covered with armor. Goliath is asking for one person to come and fight him. King Saul is the tallest one, so the Israelites expect him to be that fighter. But Saul doesn't volunteer. No one else dares to fight Goliath either, even though for 40 days the giant has been calling out for someone to fight him. Each time Goliath says, "Choose a man to fight me. If he wins, the Philistines will be your servants. If I win, you will serve the Philistines."

Today David has come to bring his brothers food and to find out if they are safe. David hears Goliath's challenge. David asks his brothers, "Who is this man? How does he dare to defy the army of the living God?"

Then David tells Saul, "I am your servant. I will fight Goliath for you." Saul responds, "You're too young. You can't fight him. He's been a fighter for a long time." David tells Saul how God protected him as he defended his sheep from lions and bears. He says that the Philistine will die because he dared to talk against God. So Saul tells David to go ahead and fight Goliath. Saul wants David to wear his armor and carry his sword. David says he can't use them, because he is not used to fighting this way.

David wants to fight the way he's used to fighting—with shepherd's tools. Every day shepherds throw stones. If a sheep gets near a cliff, the shepherd throws a stone between the sheep and the cliff. The sheep will get scared and move back to the safe path. A shepherd has to aim just right—if he throws the stone the wrong way, it might hit the sheep or make the sheep move in the wrong direction. David is very good with stones and a slingshot. He has had many chances to practice.

David tells Saul that just as God has saved him from a lion and a bear, God will save him from Goliath. David goes to the valley and looks for five round, smooth stones.

Goliath sees how much younger and shorter David is than he is. Goliath says that his gods will curse David. "Come here," he says, "and I will give your body

to the birds and the wild animals to eat.” David is unafraid. He tells Goliath, “You have weapons: a sword, a spear, and a javelin. I come in the name of the Lord of all—the God of the armies of Israel. You have dared to say that you and your gods can beat my God. Today my God will help me win so that everyone in the world will know that there is a real, strong God in Israel. The Lord doesn’t need swords and spears to win. This fight is God’s, and he will win.”

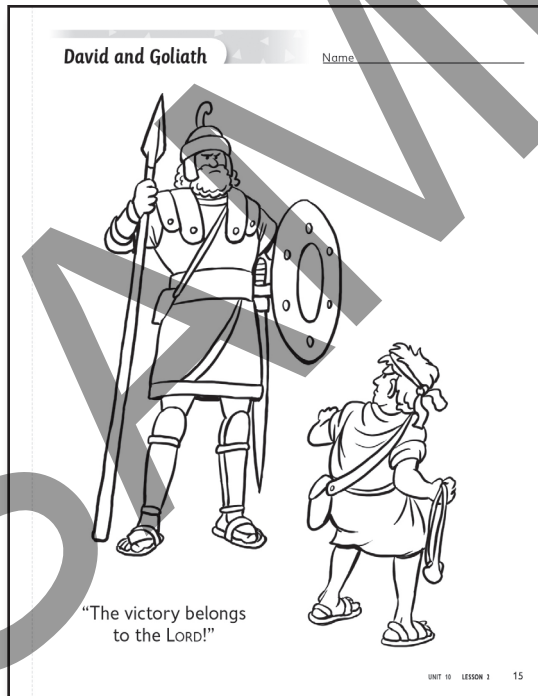
David runs up to meet Goliath as the giant approaches. David takes a stone out of his bag, puts it in his slingshot, and swings it. David’s stone hits Goliath on his forehead, where there is no armor. Goliath falls down dead.

The Philistines see how their tall, strong champion is dead, and they are afraid of Israel’s God. They run back to their own land. The Israelite army is yelling and chasing them. God has protected the Israelites and kept them safe. Now the Philistines know more about God’s strength.



Student Activities

1. Distribute the activity sheet.
2. Direct students to color David and Goliath first. They should not color Goliath’s helmet and breastplate, David’s pouch, or the background area by David’s and Goliath’s feet.



3. Give each student some aluminum foil to cut to the shapes of the helmet and breastplate. Have them lay the foil (shiny side up) under the activity sheet and draw around the helmet and breastplate, pressing hard. This will leave a line on the foil for them to cut around. Have students glue the foil on the helmet and breastplate outlines.
4. Distribute strips of green construction paper, and have students add one to their picture as grass.
5. Give each student five circles of sandpaper to serve as stones that David carried in his pouch. Have students glue these onto the picture.
6. Give each student a bamboo skewer to serve as Goliath's spear. Tell students to put glue on the picture and then press the spear onto the glue.
7. After the glue has dried, have students put the pictures in their folders or envelopes if you are planning to make a booklet.

Enrichment

- * **Devotional material.** Compare the way David and Saul faced difficult situations. Help students see David's dependence on God and Saul's dependence on himself or his army.
- * **Music.** "Only a Boy Named David" from *Sing with Me*. Have students do the actions with you.

Solomon Builds God's Temple

UNIT
11
LESSON
3

Bible Reference

1 Kings 5–8

To the Teacher

These chapters of the Book of 1 Kings tell of the construction of the temple in detail—too much detail to cover in one lesson. But students can grasp the idea of the temple's magnificence, glory, and splendor. They can be awed by the amount of gold and other elaborate materials that went into the temple. Point out that a dark spot already smudged Solomon's reign: he spent seven years building the Lord's house but thirteen years building his own palace.

Preparation/Materials

- * Picture of the temple from flannelgraph or Bible storybook
- * Activity sheets 1 and 2, one per student
- * Crayons
- * Scissors
- * Glue

Lesson Highlights

- * Solomon built a temple for the Lord.
- * The temple was a sign of God's presence and grace to the Israelites.

Background

Solomon began building the temple in approximately 966 B.C., during the fourth year of his reign. The project took seven years. The temple was patterned after the tabernacle and contained three main areas: the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the courtyard. No blocks were cut at the temple site since no hammer noise was allowed; instead, the

blocks were cut at the quarry and brought to the temple area. The blocks were covered with cedar and gold.

Art in the temple included cherubim, palm trees, and flowers. Solomon didn't allow any pagan symbols in the temple. The art may have depicted the Garden of Eden and a time when God dwelt with his people. Everything in the temple was made of the finest material and crafted by the best artisans. After the temple was completed, Solomon placed the items that David had dedicated to God in the temple treasury.

The temple was built on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David at the threshing floor. Mount Moriah is also assumed to be the place where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac. God's people worshiped him in a magnificent temple at a meaningful location.

The only furnishing that Solomon did not rebuild for the temple was the ark of the covenant. He brought this symbol of God's presence to the temple during a celebration in which Solomon and the people praised God and offered sacrifices. Solomon acknowledged that God had blessed Israel and brought them to this point. He asked God to forgive their sins and not to turn from them.

Solomon's reign was a period of great prosperity for Israel. He built not only the temple but also a beautiful palace for himself. Then he undertook many ambitious building projects throughout Israel. He initiated commerce by both land and sea, and he made Israel a great trading nation. Solomon became famous as the world's richest and wisest man.

Lesson Steps



Bridge

1. Ask students what David wanted to build for God. (A temple.) What did God think of David's idea? (God liked David's idea but said that David would not be the one to build it.) Who did God say would build his temple? (David's son Solomon.)
2. Tell students that the time had come for God to fulfill his promise to David. Solomon would build the temple that David had wanted to build. No longer would God be worshiped in a tent—the tabernacle. God would be worshiped in a permanent house—the temple.



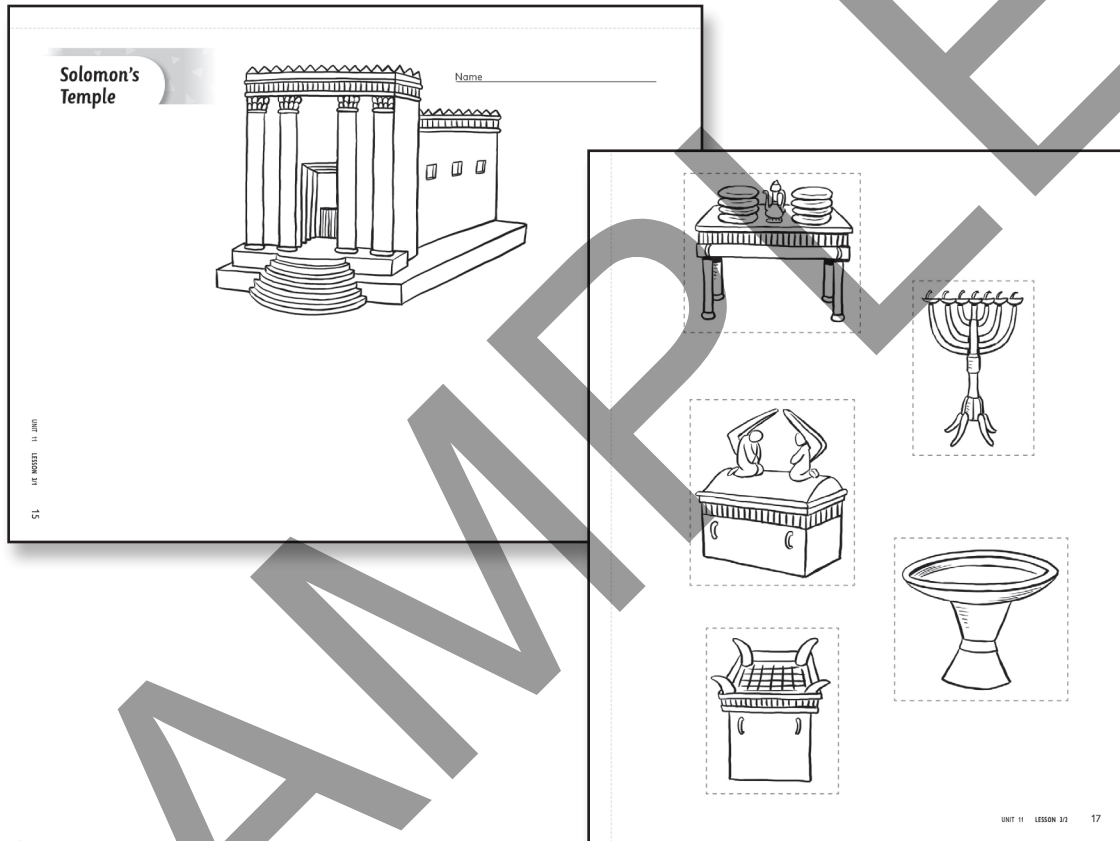
Scripture Link

1. Tell students that God gave Solomon peace. With no wars to fight, Solomon had time to plan and build a magnificent temple for the Lord.
2. Use the following outline to tell the story.
 - King Hiram sent cedar and pine logs for the temple (1 Kings 5).
 - The temple was similar in pattern to the tabernacle, with three sections: the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the outer courtyard.
 - Solomon prepared a beautiful interior (6:19–35), including:
 - Blocks cut to size at the quarry
 - Cedar carved with flowers and gourds
 - Inner and outer rooms with carved cherubim, palm trees, and flowers on the walls
 - Floors covered with gold
 - Huge angels in the inner room (Most Holy Place)
 - Solomon made furnishings for the temple. Describe the golden altar, table, lampstands, and basins (7:13–51).
 - Priests brought the ark to the temple. The tabernacle and its furnishings were brought, too (8:3–21).
 - After the priests set down the ark in the Most Holy Place, a dark cloud filled the temple. The glory of the Lord was in the cloud. Then Solomon said to the people of Israel, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who kept his promise to my father, David. I sit on the throne, and I have built the temple for the God of Israel as he promised.”
 - After all of the Israelites offered sacrifices to God, they had a celebration that lasted for 14 days.



Student Activities

1. Distribute the activity sheet. Have students color the various objects that were in Solomon's temple. As students color the items, discuss how the objects were used in worship. Remind them that these were the same items, although much larger and more ornate, that were in the tabernacle.
2. Have students cut out the objects and place them on the temple sheet.
3. Students should also color the temple with a yellow or gold crayon to remind them of the gold that Solomon used when building the temple.



Enrichment

- * **Art.** Construct a model of the temple.
- * **Bible.** Discuss how God directed David and Solomon in building this temple. Compare this with God's instructions to Moses for building the tabernacle. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two structures.
- * **Social studies.** Find a Web site that offers a virtual tour of Solomon's temple and show it to the class.