



God Calls Joshua to Be His Servant

Joshua 1:1–9



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn to live as servants of the Lord.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Explain God's commands to Joshua.
- Describe how God fulfilled His promise of giving the Israelites the Promised Land.
- Recall God's encouraging promise to be with Joshua.

KEY VERSE

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

APPLICATION

- Check to see whom you are serving.
- Remember that believers are to be strong and courageous in serving God.
- Apply God's commands to be courageous and to obey to an appropriate area of life.
- Memorize and think about God's Word.

NEXT WEEK

Rahab Shows Her Faith in God
Read Joshua 2.

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Although the book of Joshua begins by referring to “the death of Moses the servant of the LORD” (Josh. 1:1), it is necessary to go back to the end of Deuteronomy to find the events surrounding Moses’ death. After 40 years of leading Israel, Moses had reached the age of 120 years (Deut. 31:2). Even at such an old age, his “eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished” (Deut. 34:7). God had preserved Moses’ health, but Moses could “no longer go out and come in” (Deut. 31:2), an idiom for a normal day’s work. Moses’ old age was not the only reason he could no longer lead the people. Because of his disobedience, God had told Moses he could not enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:12). While God was about to fulfill His promise of giving the land to Abraham’s descendants, Moses would be prevented from entering, not because of his age, but because of his sin.

Knowing that his death was approaching, Moses asked God to set a leader over the people (Num. 27:16). Moses was concerned that the people “not be like sheep which have no shepherd” (27:17). God commanded that Joshua was to lead the people (27:18). In a public ceremony, in the presence of the high priest Eleazar and all the Israelites, Moses laid his hands on Joshua, a visible sign that God had chosen Joshua to lead the people (27:22–23). Moses encouraged Joshua: “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed” (Deut. 31:7–8). Moses knew the challenge it was to lead the Israelites, but he knew from experience the strongest possible encouragement: the Lord had not left him, and neither would He leave Joshua!

Before the death of Moses, the Lord displayed His grace to him one more time. The Lord directed Moses to go up Mount Nebo, just east of the north end of the Dead Sea (Deut. 32:49). From Mount Nebo, Moses was able to see for the first time the land of Canaan, which God was about to give to Israel. Dramatically, the last words God said to Moses were, “This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with you eyes, but you shall not cross over there” (Deut. 34:4). After seeing the land and being reminded once more of the faithfulness of God, Moses died. God buried his body (34:5–6). The people of Israel mourned 30 days for their leader (34:8).

Moses is called “the servant of the LORD” 18 times in the Old Testament (14 of these occurring in Joshua). Even though God punished him for not honoring His holiness at the waters of Meribah, Moses still was unlike any other prophet in Israel—“the LORD knew [Moses] face to face” (Deut. 34:10). Moses was the greatest prophet until John the Baptist came, and he was one of the few men in the Old Testament who were called “the servant of the LORD.”

The book of Joshua begins by calling Joshua “Moses’ assistant.” God had been preparing Joshua for leadership for more than 40 years. Joshua led Israel in its first battle after the Red Sea crossing against the Amalekites (Ex. 17:10). He accompanied Moses up the mountain when Moses was given God’s Law and the plans for the tabernacle (Ex. 24:13). Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who believed that God could give Israel the Promised Land (Num. 14). The Lord said of Joshua that he “wholly followed the LORD” (Num. 32:12). Although Joshua had been faithful and successful, God knew that he needed to be encouraged and exhorted in his new role as the leader of the Israelites.

God encouraged Joshua by promising him success in leading the Israelites. The first promise that God gave was the land itself. God had promised the land to Abraham, and now He was going to keep that promise. He encouraged Joshua, “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses” (Josh. 1:3). Finally, after seven centuries, Israel would possess the land (1:4). The second promise was that Joshua would have victory over his enemies: “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life” (1:5). He would be unbeatable in battle. The third promise was that just as God had been with Moses, so He would be with Joshua. God said to him, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (1:5). This precious promise is repeated for believers in Hebrews 13:5. Jesus similarly promised His disciples, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

God’s encouragement was paralleled by exhortation. As Moses previously had exhorted Joshua (Deut. 31:7), the Lord now commanded Joshua to “be strong and of good courage” (Josh. 1:6, 9). Joshua did not need to fear because God would allow him to divide the land for the people (1:6). When in doubt or discouraged, Joshua could look to the end he was certain would come because the faithful God had promised success. He was never to “be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD [his] God was with [him] wherever [he went]” (1:9). Joshua was commanded not to fear, because God was with him. Believers also have the precious promises of God’s presence and His earthly and eternal care.

God’s second exhortation is enmeshed between the commands not to fear. In verse 7, the phrase “be strong and very courageous” is similar to the other exhortation, but here the idea is more of resoluteness than of courage. God commanded Joshua to be resolute, “to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go” (Josh. 1:7). For Joshua to be successful in his service, God commanded strict obedience to His Word, an obedience not varying in the slightest detail. Joshua was not to fail either by being negligent or by being prideful and choosing his way rather than God’s way. Absolute submission was necessary. Joshua’s resolution to carry out God’s Law would be strengthened by his meditation on the Law (1:8). God commanded Joshua to think about the Book of the Law day and night. Joshua’s being consumed with the Law would be evidenced by its presence on his lips. His success would be dependent upon his unwavering clinging to God’s commands.

The beginning of Joshua’s ministry was marked by a significant question: would he be faithful as Moses had? Would he accept encouragement from God’s promises and heed God’s exhortation? Would Joshua, Moses’ assistant, someday be called the servant of the Lord, even as Moses had? After his faithful life and death, Joshua, like Moses before him, was called “the servant of the LORD” (Josh. 24:29). Every believer should strive to be strong and courageous, to embrace God’s encouraging promises and heed His exhortations, so that he, too, can be called the servant of the Lord.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth”
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



1

God’s Instructions

Read Psalm 27 and Joshua 1:1–9. Ask the students whether they noticed similar words/phrases in the two passages—for example, strong, courage, God will not forsake, do not be afraid, etc. Explain that in today’s lesson, they will be learning more about God’s instruction for Joshua, which is also an instruction given throughout the Bible for all believers.



A Servant of the Lord

Let some students try carrying bunches of objects across the room without dropping them. You can start with a few and then keep adding objects until none of the students is able to carry them all. Tasks can become difficult without any help. Now give the students a bag to put the items in, or let them help one another. Things can become much easier when we have someone to help us. When we help someone do something he is not able to do, or does not want to do, we are serving him. To help, we must do what the other person asks us to do. Do you think God needs a servant? No. There is nothing God cannot do or needs help with! But God has chosen to give us the privilege of helping Him do His work. He does not need our help, but He allows us to help anyway. Joshua was a servant of God because he carried out all the instructions God gave him. Joshua also served God by helping the Israelites carry out God’s instructions. A good servant does whatever he is told to do, exactly as he is told.



Footprints

Choose one of the ideas below to illustrate Joshua 1:3—“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.”

Classroom Footprints

Cut out large footprints from colorful paper and tape them around the room, on floors, and walls. Later, have each student choose a footprint to decorate with stickers or “land” decor such as grass, dirt, sticks, flowers. Then have them glue on the Bible verse.

Hopping Path

Place footprints around the floor, and have students hop or follow the footprints into the classroom, perhaps finding treasure or going to various tables or activities for the day.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done” (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read Joshua 1:1–9.

Introduction

The book of Joshua marks a great transition in the life and history of the sons of Israel. The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness were coming to an end, and the Israelites were now going to enter the land that God had promised to their ancestor Abraham (Gen. 15:1–21). The opening of the book also marks the change in leadership from Moses to Joshua.



Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: What are some important things that happened before the story of the book of Joshua?

Answer: Abraham lived more than 400 years before. Abraham was the father, or ancestor, of all the Israelites. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua were all related to each other.

The Exodus

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, where they had been slaves for 400 years.

The Ten Commandments

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses and the people.

The Spies

After the Israelites had left Egypt, 12 spies were sent into the land of Canaan. Ten of those spies returned and warned the Israelites not to try to go into the land. The other two spies returned and encouraged the people to enter the land. Because of the warnings, though, the people became so afraid that they refused to enter. This angered God so much that He judged them, and everyone older than 20 (except Joshua and Caleb, the faithful spies) had to die before the Israelites could finally enter into the land.

LOQ: Why was the death of Moses important in the life of Israel?

Answer: Moses is one of the most important figures in the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Moses was specially chosen by God to lead the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, which together are called the Law. After the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, it was Moses who led the people in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses

was a very humble man who served God and the people. Moses was very good and obedient to God, but he had openly disobeyed God at one time during the wilderness wanderings and, as a penalty, God forbade him from entering the Promised Land. So Moses had to die before the Israelites could enter the Promised Land. Upon Moses' death, a new leader had to be chosen to lead God's people. Joshua had already been chosen by God, and Moses had helped Joshua to prepare. So when Moses died, Joshua took his place.

LOQ: What command did God give to Joshua?

Answer: In verse 2, God tells Joshua, "Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel." Joshua and the Israelites were on the eastern side of the Jordan River. God wanted them to cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land.

LOQ: Why might it have been difficult for Joshua to do what God told him to do?

Answer: At the time of the exodus from Egypt, 40 years before, the Bible says that there were 600,000 men, not counting women and children (Exod. 12:37), who made up the sons of Israel. If one assumes that over the 40-year period in the wilderness, for every person who died, at least one person was born, there might have been more than two million people with Joshua. To move two million people over land may not have been a big problem, but to move that many people over a river would have been very difficult. And at the time that God wanted Joshua to cross the river, the river had gotten wider and deeper because it was flood time. The task of getting everyone across to the other side of the river was very difficult, but God had already worked a miracle at the Red Sea, and Joshua knew that, if necessary, God could do the same thing for him this time.

LOQ: What was so important about the land on the other side of the Jordan?

Answer: More than 400 years before Moses and Joshua, God had made a promise (covenant) with their ancestor Abraham. In the covenant, God promised that He would give to Abraham four things: (1) a son, (2) a nation, (3) a land, and (4) a blessing (Gen. 12:1–3). We know that Isaac was born to Abraham. All the Israelites with Moses and Joshua were descendants of Abraham (a nation without a homeland). And now God wanted to fulfill another part of His promise, land. This land is often called the Promised Land because God had promised it to Abraham.

LOQ: Where are we located on this map?

Answer: *[Show a map and identify the United States.]*

LOQ: Where is the Promised Land, or modern day Israel, located on the map?

Answer: *[Identify modern Israel and the Middle East with a map of Israel.]*

LOQ: Where are Egypt and the Jordan River on the map?

Answer: *[Identify modern Egypt and the Jordan River.]*

LOQ: What attitude did God tell Joshua he must have to be successful?

Answer: Three times in this passage, God told Joshua to "be strong and courageous" (1:6–7, 9). One of those times, God said to "be strong and very courageous" (1:7) God was telling Joshua to trust in Him. If God is on our side, there is no need to be afraid. We should trust in God because He can do all things. God told Joshua

that He would be with him just as He had been with Moses, whom He had never forsaken (1:5). Also, God said, “for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (1:9).

LOQ: What did God tell Joshua to do to be successful?

Answer: We must trust God, but God also wants people to know what He wants them to do. God gave the Israelites His message. It was called the Law. God told Joshua to obey the Law (1:7–8), talk about the Law (1:8), and meditate on, or think about, the Law (1:8). Just like Joshua was to read, study, talk about, and think about the Law, his Bible, God wants everyone who loves Him to read, study, talk about, and think about their Bibles. Because we forget things, it is important to be reminded of what God has told us in His Word. This way, all God’s people will know what the truth is and know how to be obedient, just like Joshua.

Summary

As the children of Israel prepared to enter the Promised Land, God appointed Joshua to be the new leader of the people. Moses died before the people entered the land, but before his death, God blessed him by letting him see the land. God encouraged Joshua and the people as they entered the land by telling them to be strong and courageous to trust God and obey His Law.

Application

Believers today are called to be strong and courageous to obey God’s Word. It takes strength and courage to do what is right when others say that it is wrong. God gave us the Bible because He loves us and wants what is best for us. God has instructed us to meditate on His word and obey it throughout the day. We can do this by keeping it in our minds through memorization. When we do this, we are reminded of the path that we are to take so that we do not stray from it.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Teacher Transition

Have one teacher start the lesson time by teaching about Moses. When it’s time to transition to Joshua’s leadership, have a different teacher come to teach the rest of the lesson. You also could discuss what happened and how, at other times, teachers or leaders have changed.



Being Strong and Courageous

The lesson emphasizes that Joshua was to be strong and courageous. He was to stick resolutely to the task God gave him. Hang objects or pictures pertaining to the lesson on the board (Bible, bag of dirt to represent the land, hands to represent the commissioning of Joshua, a shepherd’s crook to represent leadership of the people, etc.) Hang one or more with silly putty or tape, which will only hold them up for a short time. As they keep falling to the ground, explain that the tape is not doing its job; it will not keep holding the objects up. In the same way, God

encouraged Joshua to keep doing what he had been instructed to do. He was not to give up after a day or a week or even a year. He had to keep being faithful as God strengthened him.

Praise and Worship

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord

I Will Delight

Make Me a Servant

O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E

Trust and Obey

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Encouragement Flags

Materials: pipe cleaners, clothespins, construction paper, flag templates (at back of lesson)

Directions: Remind the students that God instructed Joshua to meditate on His promises for encouragement to serve Him faithfully. Tell them that today they will make reminder flags. Give each student a flag template, a pipe cleaner, and a clothespin. They should cut out the flag and fold it in half. Then they should thread a pipe cleaner through the metal spring in the center of the clothespin and fold the pipe cleaner in half and keep twisting it to form a flexible “pole” at a right angle to the clothespin. Have them glue the end of the pipe cleaner between the folded flag template. On the blank side of the flag, have the students draw or write a description of some tasks they must be faithful to do.



Medal of Honor

Bring to class some war medals, and explain what they are and why they are given. Better yet, invite a veteran to come in and talk about his medals. Talk about times when children have been strong and courageous for doing the right thing, obeying God.



Medal of Honor Craft

Materials: colored construction paper, crayons, scissors, glue

Directions: Give the students construction paper, crayons, scissors, and glue. Have each student make, decorate, and wear his own medal. Give each a copy of Joshua 1:7 to glue to the medal.



1
2

Dress-up Soldier

Materials: copies of “Soldier” craft pages at the back of the lesson, crayons, scissors, glue.



Directions: Give the students a copy of the craft pages. Have them color and cut out the soldier outfit and then glue the pieces to the second page to complete the soldier. Talk about the Bible verse, and explain that God's soldier needs the Bible as his sword.

Borders Box

Materials: square shoebox lids; sand; blue, black and brown markers; glue

Directions: Give each student a square lid. Direct the students to label the sides of the lid North, South, East, and West (in the correct order) with a black marker. Then they should write "ISRAEL" in large, bold letters in the center of the lid. Direct the students to color a brown land border along the north side of the box. They should label this land "Lebanon." Along the east side of the box, students should draw a blue river and label it "Euphrates River." Along the south side of the box, students should spread glue and sprinkle sand over it. Later, once the glue has dried, label this border "Wilderness." Along the west side, the students should color a blue sea with a brown shoreline to its right, and then spread glue on the shoreline and sprinkle it with sand. This border should be labeled "Mediterranean Seacoast." This craft is designed to help students visualize the borders of the land described in Joshua 1:4.



"God Calls Joshua"

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of today's lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



2
3

Journal Pages: "Courage"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

Coloring Sheets

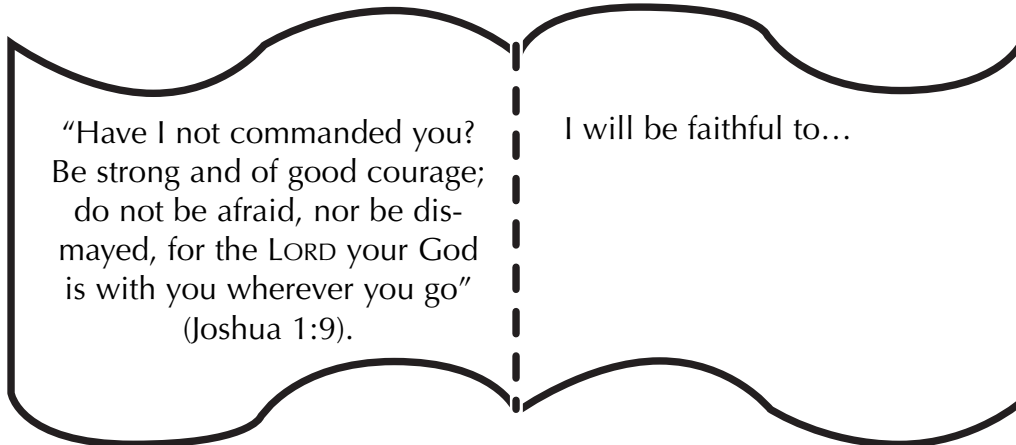
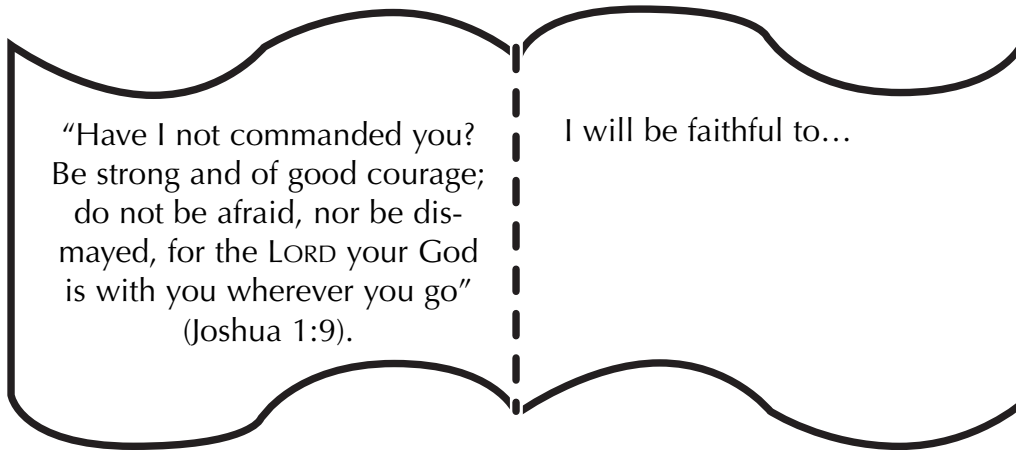
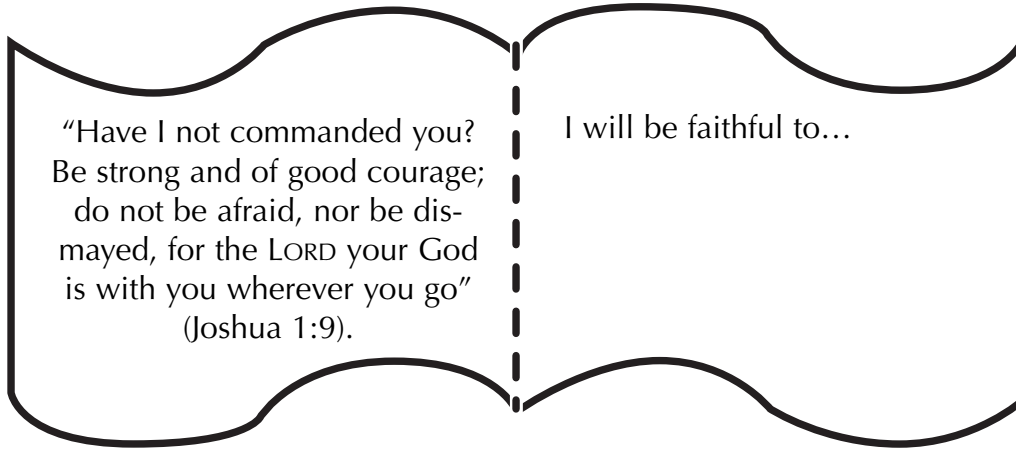
Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

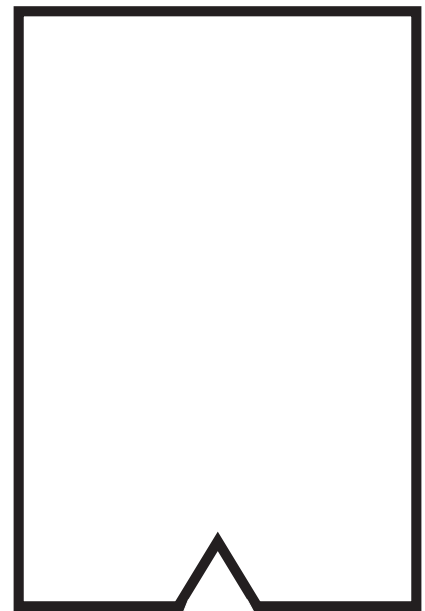
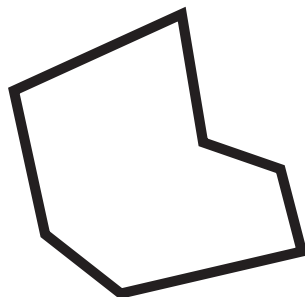
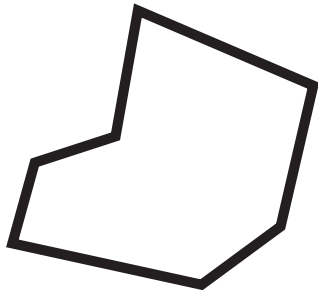
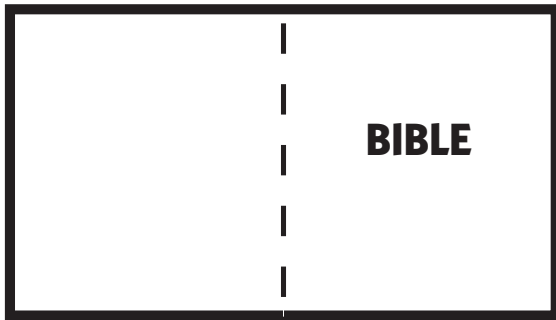
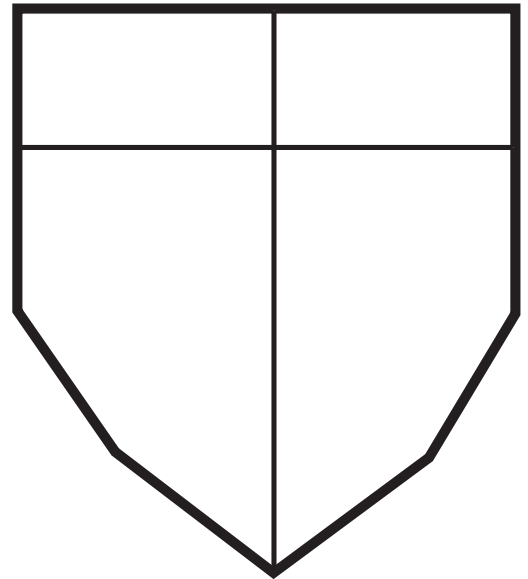
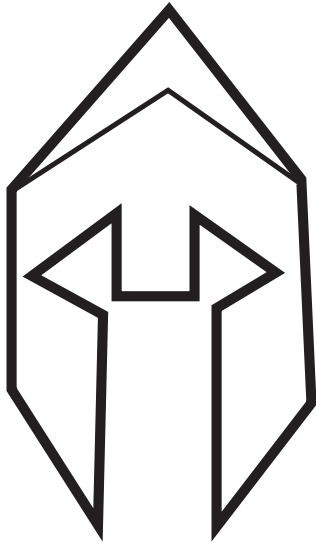
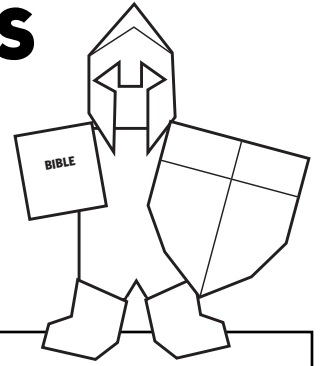
Encouragement Flags



Be Strong and Courageous

Soldier Pieces

Make a soldier by cutting out the pieces and gluing them to the "Be Strong and Courageous" template.



Be Strong and Courageous

“Only be strong and courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go” (Joshua 1:7).

God Calls Joshua



Joshua 1:1-9

Name _____

1. How long had Moses led the Israelites in the wilderness? _____

2. Whom did Moses choose as his assistant in Deuteronomy 34:9? _____

3. Why was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land?

4. What did Joshua have to do if God was going to give him good success?

5. Write out Joshua 1:9.

6. Who was going to be with Joshua wherever he went? _____

Courage

Tomorrow you have to stand in front of the class and give a report, but you do not think you can do it. Whenever you think about being in front of the class, your knees begin to shake. Has this ever really happened to you? Do you sometimes feel small and insignificant compared to others? Joshua could have felt the same way when God called him to replace Moses, but he did not.

To find out what God said to Joshua in Joshua 1:5 and why Joshua was not afraid, unscramble the following Bible verse.

I LLW OTN EAVEL OUY RON SAKAFOR UOY.

To find out what God has said to you in Hebrews 13:5 to encourage you, unscramble the following Bible verse.

I LLW EVERN VELEA OYU ORN FSROAEK YUO.

You can be sure that God will keep His promise. God promised Abraham the land for his descendants, and Joshua would lead the Israelites (Abraham's descendants) into the land. God always keeps His promises, so the next time you stand in front of the class, remember that the Creator of the world is with you. That will surely give you courage!

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In Joshua 1, God tells Joshua three times not to be afraid. He want Joshua to remember to be strong because He is with him. By meditating on Hebrews 13:5, you can remember to be strong, too.

This week, I will meditate on Hebrews 13:5 by _____

Hebrews 13:5 reminds me that God is _____

When I feel small and insignificant, I will remember that God is

God is with me. I know this because _____

Prayer

Jesus loves little children. He says that everyone should come to Him with the faith of a child. You are important to Him, and He is pleased to help you. Confess to Him what you are afraid of, and ask Him to put the courage of Joshua into your heart as you meditate on His promises.

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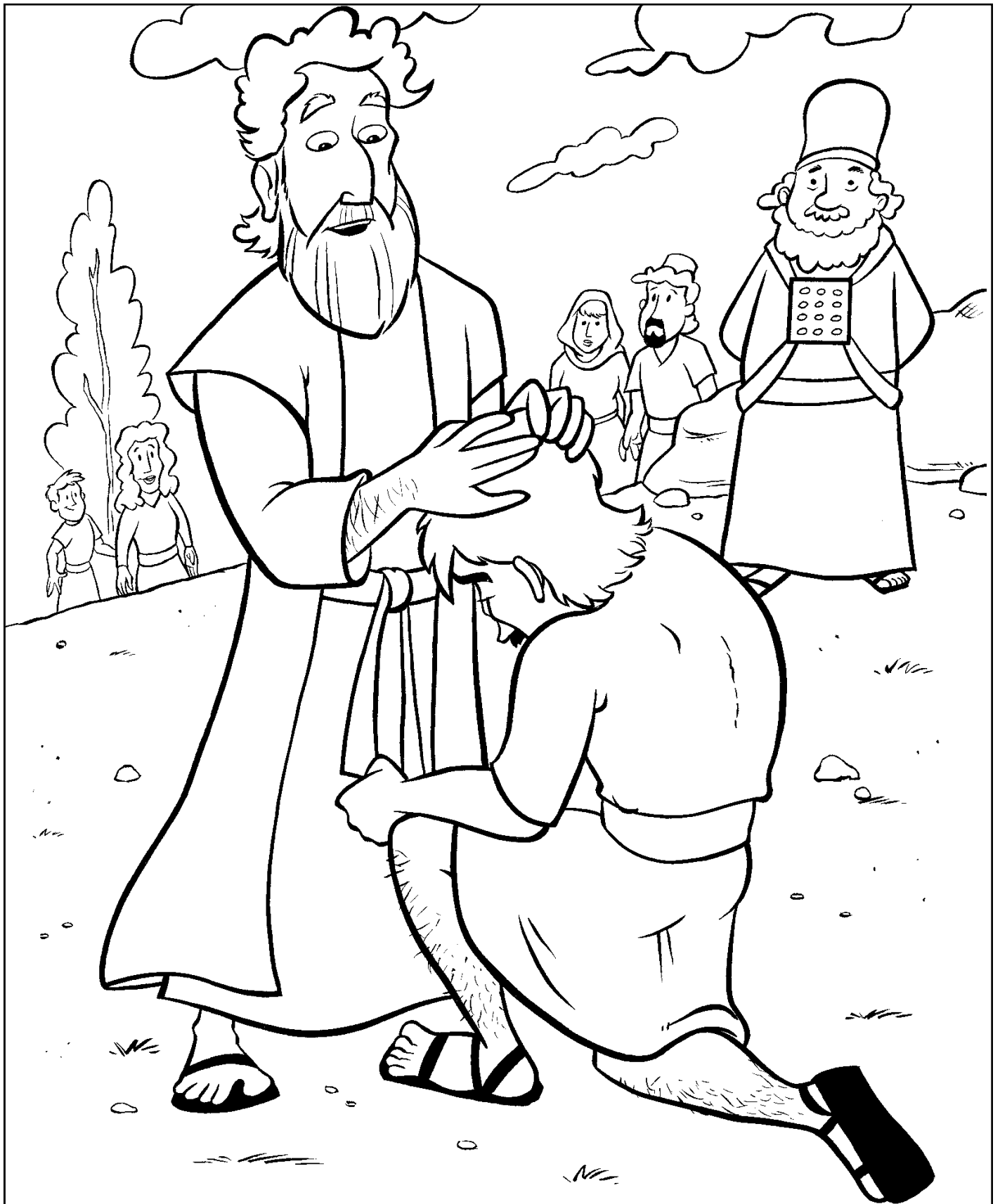
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**“Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it’”
(Deuteronomy 31:7).**



"...that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left" (Joshua 1:7).

