



UNIT 7 | SESSION 1

# GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

JOSHUA 1

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Psalm 119:105

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:**

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

**CHRIST CONNECTION:**

God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God's kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

We often think that fear is the absence of courage, and to some degree, it is. However, true courage is not someone who is free of fear. Courage comes to us most often, and especially when we are young, from the presence of another. In C. S. Lewis' *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy, the young heroine of Lewis' stories, was on a boat that went into the dark night of a cave where their worst fears were realized.

Going into the cave, they all were afraid. Inside the cave, their fears were realized. They were in the middle of the night and without hope, and Lucy (whose name means "light") asked Aslan to send help.

Aslan (the Christ figure in Lewis' work) answered by sending his light into their darkness and his word to her heart. He said, "Courage, dear heart."

The gospel tells us that our greatest enemy, sin, and our greatest fear, death, has no hold on us—not because of courage that rises up from within us, but from courage that came from outside of us. Jesus came from outside of us and said to us through His life, death, and resurrection, "Courage, dear heart."

The promise of peace, true rest that Moses and now Joshua sought, was not conditional on what they saw in front of them. It was

based on the character of God. The promise God gave to Joshua was the promise of His presence in the middle of the dark night. This promise is true for us and is experienced in the person and work of Christ.

As you prepare to teach, take a moment to allow the Person of God's Spirit to whisper to your heart what God's Word proclaims to be true—no matter how difficult your week or dark your night. You are loved, you are cared for, you are not alone. Christ is with you. Christ has gone before you; Christ is interceding for you.

Remember the words God gave Joshua: "Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). What a promise. What a Savior.

### PEOPLE TO KNOW

**Joshua:** one of the 12 Israelites spies appointed by Moses to scout the land of Canaan; chosen by God as Moses' successor to lead the Israelites to the promised land

# WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “Have you ever been afraid? What are some things you are afraid of? In today’s Bible story, a man named Joshua had a good reason to be afraid, but was he? Let’s find out.”

## 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: GRIP TEST



Challenge kids to see how strong their grip is. Lead them through the following steps:

1. Put a tennis ball or stress ball in the palm of your hand.
2. Squeeze the ball using your fingers but not your thumb.
3. Clench as tight as you can and then release your grip.
4. Repeat this as many times as you can; try for at least 10!

**SAY** “Great job! Do you think it is important for a leader to be physically strong? Why or why not? Being strong also means being able to persevere, or continue to do something difficult. Did you feel like giving up while squeezing the ball? Today, we will hear how God told Joshua to be strong. Joshua needed to persevere because leading the Israelites would not be easy.”

### OPTION 2: EVERYDAY COURAGE

Before the session, write the numbers 1–6 on a dry erase board. Next to each number, list a location or time at which a kid might need to be courageous (at home, at school, in the car, alone, with friends, at night).

Invite the kids to take turns rolling a dice. Read the corresponding location or time and prompt kids to discuss how they might need to be courageous in that situation. For example, a kid might need to have courage to stand up to someone being unkind at school. Remind kids that they can always ask an adult for help. They can pray and ask God to give them courage.

**SAY** “We don’t always feel brave or courageous, but we can ask God to help us. In the Bible story we will hear today, Joshua was about to lead the Israelites into the promised land. God encouraged Joshua and told him to be courageous. I can’t wait to tell you more.”

# INTRODUCE the Bible Story

## 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

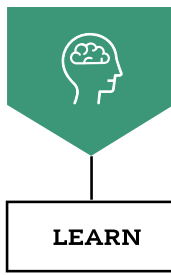
Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “Hello, everyone! I’m [your name], and I’m so glad to be with you today to tell you about how God is working out His plan to rescue sinners. We find these stories in the Bible, God’s Word. The Bible is full of stories that all fit together to show God’s greatness and our need for a Savior. We can’t see God with our eyes, but He reveals Himself to us through His Word so we can know Him and His Son, Jesus. Let’s get started.”

## 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “Have you ever heard people talk about the ‘big picture’? What do you think that means? [Pause for kids to respond.] Keeping the ‘big picture’ in mind means looking at or thinking of the whole story instead of just the details. In each of the Bible stories we will hear, we’ll think beyond the details of the story to the way God is working out His greater plan through it.

Our big picture question is, **What is the Bible?** I know what you’re thinking: ‘I already know what the Bible is; it’s a book!’ Yes, but the Bible is more than just a book! **The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** Let’s say our big picture question and answer together: **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tell us what is true about God and ourselves.**”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# LEARN the Bible Story

### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Joshua 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Encouraged Joshua.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

### GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

“**God’s people were near the land of Canaan** (KAY nuhn). This was the promised land, the place God said Abraham’s descendants would one day live. **The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The older generation had died. Moses, their leader, had died too, and now it was time for the remaining people to go into the land.**

**God chose Joshua to be the new leader of Israel. It was a big job, but God encouraged Joshua. He promised to give Joshua success in the land. God said, “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.”**

**Then God said, “Be strong and courageous.”** God wanted Joshua to lead the people into the land because He had promised it to His people. God said, “Be strong and very courageous to obey everything Moses taught you. Study, remember, and obey the commands written in the book of instruction. If you do this, you will be successful in whatever you do.”

**God encouraged Joshua again: “Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, will be with you wherever you go.”**

**So Joshua sent a message throughout the Israelites’ camp: “Get ready! We are going to cross the Jordan River and take this land. God is giving it to us, just like He promised.”**

**The Israelites agreed and got ready. “We will do everything you have commanded us,” they told Joshua. “We will go everywhere you send us. We will obey you like we obeyed Moses. We trust that God will be with you like He was with Moses.”**

Christ Connection: God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God’s kingdom. ”

### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Sketch a diagram:** Draw a river on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Add stick figures on one side of the river. Label the area on the other side *Promised Land*.

**Use hand motions:** Perform a hand motion each time you say a key word from the Bible story. Consider searching online for the sign language motion to use with the words *encourage, strong, and courageous*.



## Small Group Discussion/Questions

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ That was a great story! Did anyone notice what Joshua’s job was before God called him to take over Moses’ job? Open your Bible to Joshua 1. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Josh. 1:1.]

That’s right; he was Moses’ assistant! Isn’t it cool that He prepared Joshua by having Moses train him? God knows everything. [Choose volunteers to read aloud Josh. 1:3,5,7,17.] God gave some big promises to Joshua. He wanted Joshua to remember His faithfulness to Moses in leading the people so that he would be encouraged for his new job.

One more thing: God gave Joshua a reason not to be afraid. What was it? [Choose a volunteer to read Josh. 1:5,9.] God said He would be with Joshua. How do you think that helped Joshua not be afraid? Even if Joshua felt afraid, knowing that God was with him helped him obey God’s commands and do the right thing. ”

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. If you trust in Jesus as your LORD and Savior, you can be sure that He will always be with you and will lead you through His Word. Because He is always with you, you can talk to Him through prayer any time. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ Do you think Joshua had a good reason to be afraid and discouraged? Why? ”

Point out that Joshua had been with the Israelites all through the wilderness. He saw how rebellious they could be. Now he was supposed to be the leader to take the new generation of Israelites to a place where they had never been. Prompt kids to discuss how they would feel taking on a task like that.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 15:13.)

| **SAY** “ Why do you think God commanded Joshua to be both strong and courageous? ”

Prompt kids to consider what a leader would be like if he were strong but not courageous. Point out that being strong wouldn’t mean much if you give up every time you are afraid! What would a leader be like if he were courageous but not very strong? If you were not able to physically take on the enemy, you would be in trouble. God knows everything; He knew what kind of leader Joshua needed to be.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Josh. 1:6-7,9.)

| **SAY** “ When you are afraid or discouraged, how do you know Jesus is with you? ”

Explain that when Jesus was on earth, He told His followers that when He left He would send them another Helper, the Holy Spirit. Tell kids that Jesus gives His followers the Holy Spirit to dwell in them forever. Point out that when we are afraid or discouraged, we can trust the Holy Spirit to take our prayers to God, who knows and provides exactly what we need. God’s children are never alone.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:16-17,26.)