

Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 7–8

MAIN POINT: God punished Achan for his sin.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

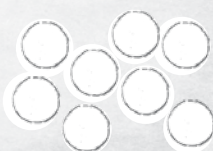
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

When the Israelites conquered Jericho, God told them not to take anything. Everything in the city was to be destroyed and set apart for God. Achan must have assumed no one would notice if he kept a few things for himself. The cloak was beautiful, and he sure could use some pieces of silver and a bar of gold. No harm, no foul. Right? Wrong. God had commanded complete obedience from the Israelites.

Imagine Joshua's surprise when a few men in Ai defeated his army of a few thousand men. Had God failed to keep His promise to protect them from their enemies? The next morning, God revealed that it was Achan who had sinned. Achan and his family were stoned to death. The Israelites

covered their bodies with a large pile of stones as a reminder of the consequences of sin.

The Israelites faced the people of Ai again. This time, God was with them. He had helped them destroy Jericho; now He would help them destroy Ai—except this time God allowed them to plunder the city, keeping goods and livestock for themselves.

The story of Achan demonstrates that God hates sin. (See Prov. 6:16-19.) God is just to punish sin. Here's the bad news: We are all sinners, and “the wages of sin is death,” but here is the good news: “the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

God's presence with Israel was tied directly to their obedience to Him. As you present the gospel to preschoolers, help them understand that it is our faith—not our obedience—that gives us right standing with God. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, God is always with us and we are victorious over our enemies of sin and death.

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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

Joshua 7–8

Joshua and the Israelites were in the promised land! Now they had to defeat the people who lived there. But God was with His people, and He promised to fight for them.

First, God helped the Israelites take over the city of Jericho. He told them what to do when they attacked the city. He told them what to destroy and what to keep for the Lord. But the Israelites did not obey God completely. They kept some of the things for themselves, and God knew. So **when the Israelites tried to take over the next city, God did not help them. The men in the city of Ai (AY igh) chased away the Israelites.**

The Israelites were afraid, and **Joshua** was sad. He **did not know why God let them lose the battle. God told Joshua, “The people have sinned. They took some of the things I said not to take. This is why they did not win the battle.”**

The next day, the Israelites came together and God showed Joshua which man had sinned. The man's name was Achan (AY kuhn). Achan confessed that he had taken a beautiful coat, some silver, and some gold. The things were buried in Achan's tent. Achan and his family were punished.

Then God told Joshua to attack the city of Ai again. This time, God promised that the Israelites would be able to take over the city. When it was nighttime, Joshua sent part of the army to hide behind the city. In the morning, the rest of the army marched toward the city.

The king of Ai saw the army coming, and he sent out his

men to fight them. When the army of Ai got near, Joshua and the Israelites ran away. They pretended to be afraid, and the army of Ai chased them away from the city. The people who lived in Ai did not know that part of Israel's army was hiding behind the city.

Joshua held out his sword, and the men who were hiding **took over the city** and set it on fire. **This time, the Israelites did just what God said and they defeated the city of Ai.**

Joshua built an altar to God, and the people made offerings to God. Joshua read the words of the law so everyone heard the laws that Moses had commanded.

Christ Connection: God punished Achan for his sin. The Bible says that the punishment for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that after Achan's death, the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged" (Josh. 8:1), a reminder of His promise to be with him. (Josh. 1:9) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 7–8

MAIN POINT: God punished Achan for his sin.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Welcome time

- “A Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Find the Items” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to circle the coat, coins, and bar of gold in the picture.

SAY • Good job finding the items. We found a coat, some silver coins, and a bar of gold. In our Bible story today, a man named Achan took from Jericho a coat, silver, and gold after God said not to take anything. That's sin! Something bad happened to the Israelites because of Achan's sin. Let's find out what.



LOW PREP

- hand-sized item
- “A Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)” song
- “Wherever You Go” song

Play “Who has it?”

Invite preschoolers to sit in a tight circle. Select one child to be *It*. Lead *It* to sit in the middle of the circle with his eyes closed. Consider using a blindfold if needed. Give the small item to one of the preschoolers. Explain that the preschoolers will pass the item around the circle while the

music plays. When the music stops, the preschooler holding the item should hold it so *It* cannot see. *It* must try to guess who has the item. Play again selecting another preschooler to be *It*.

SAY • *It* had to figure out who had the [*item name*]. In our Bible story today, someone took some things God said not to take. Israel lost a battle because of this man's sin. Joshua didn't have to guess who took the items because God showed him. The man and his whole family were punished. Let's find out who it was.

Find hidden items

Hide a coat, some silver coins, and a block covered in gold paper in the room before the session. Invite preschoolers to search for the hidden items. Consider taking pictures of the items so preschoolers will know what the items look like. After preschoolers find the items, allow them to take turns hiding the items themselves.

SAY • We hid things for fun, but in today's Bible story, someone hid some things for a wrong reason. This person took things that he was not supposed to take, so he hid them. What happened afterwards was not good. Let's discover what happened.

- coat
- silver coins
- block
- gold paper
- tape

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to march like soldiers to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Introduce the Bible story

• silver coins

Invite preschoolers to take turns examining silver coins.

SAY • In our Bible story, someone took some silver coins and other things God said not to take. Bad things happened because this person sinned.

Watch or tell the Bible story

• Bible

• "Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai" video

• Bible Story Picture Poster

Open your Bible to Joshua 7.

SAY • God's words are in the Bible, and God's words are true. The Bible is the most important book there is.

Show the Bible story video "Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

SAY • Disobeying God is sin. Achan disobeyed God's instructions when he took things from Jericho for himself. **God punished Achan for his sin.** The Bible says that the punishment for sin is death. We sin too. We deserve to be punished, but Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Why did God let Israel lose the battle against Ai? (*sin, someone kept things from Jericho for himself*)
2. Who took a coat, silver, and gold and buried them under his tent? (*Achan*)
3. What happened to Achan and his family? (*They were punished.*)
4. What happened when the Israelites fought Ai the second time? (*They won because God was with them.*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Achan did not trust God to give him good things, so he took things for himself. Achan forgot that God is good and wise. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God.*** We have a good and wise God. We can trust Him to always give us what is best.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Joshua 1:9. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Wherever You Go.”

• Key Passage Poster
• “Wherever You Go” song

SAY • The Israelites were afraid and Joshua was sad when they lost the battle at Ai, but God was still with His people. He showed them their sin, so they would turn away from it and obey Him. Sometimes we don’t understand what God is doing, but we can remember that God is with us and He is always working His good plan.

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 7–8

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KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.



Play hide-and-seek

Play a game of hide-and-seek. Choose one child to be *It*. *It* counts to 10 while the other preschoolers hide. Invite preschoolers to remain hidden until *It* finds them. Make sure an adult leader watches preschoolers as they hide for safety.

SAY • After **God punished Achan for his sin**, God promised that the Israelites would be able to take over Ai. Part of the army hid behind the city. When Joshua held out his sword, the men came out of hiding and took over Ai. God won the battle for His people. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.

Talk about sin

Help preschoolers understand the concept of sin. Explain that we sin when we do the things God says not to do or when we don't do the things God says to do. Invite preschoolers to list sins while you write or draw a simple picture of each one on an index card. Help preschoolers form answers by asking them for what things they get in trouble for doing. Gently redirect preschoolers who may want to tell you about someone else's sin to tell about their sin. As the discussion wanes, distribute the index cards

- index cards
- marker

Note: Young preschoolers may have a hard time recognizing personal sin. Remind children that everyone has sinned except Jesus.

and invite preschoolers to rip them up into tiny pieces and throw them away.

SAY • In today's Bible story, Achan sinned by doing something God said not to do. **God punished Achan for his sin.** The Bible says that the punishment for sin is death. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished, but Jesus came to take the punishment for us. When we trust in Jesus, God looks at us as if we never ever sinned—not one time! Our sins are all gone just like the ones we put on our index cards. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.

Dig items out of sand

Place a tablecloth under a plastic tub filled with a few inches of sand. Hide silver and gold coins in the sand. Provide sand toys for preschoolers to use as they play in the sand. Encourage preschoolers to search for the hidden coins.

SAY • Achan took some things that God said not to take. He hid them so no one would find them. **God punished Achan for his sin.** The Bible says that the punishment for sin is death. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.

- plastic tub
- sand
- toy silver and gold coins
- sand toys
- tablecloth

Play in a tent

Set up a tent for preschoolers to play in. Place several Bibles in the tent for preschoolers to handle and look at pictures.

SAY • Achan sinned by taking things he was not supposed to and then burying them in his tent. **God punished Achan for his sin.** The Bible says that

- tent
- Bibles

the punishment for sin is death. Because we sin, we deserve to be punished. Jesus came to take the punishment for us. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.



Play “Wait, Wait, Go!”

Play this version of “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Invite preschoolers to sit down in a circle. Select a preschooler to be *Joshua*. *Joshua* walks around the circle gently touching each child while saying “wait.” When *Joshua* touches a child while saying “go,” *Joshua* runs around the circle with his arm held up pretending to have a sword while the preschooler he tapped runs behind him. *Joshua* sits down where the preschooler he tapped was sitting. Then that preschooler becomes *Joshua*. Play until each preschooler has a turn being *Joshua*.

SAY • Part of the Israelite army was hidden behind the city of Ai while the rest of the army pretended be scared and ran away. When Joshua held out his sword, the men who were hiding took over the city. After **God punished Achan for his sin**, the Israelites won the battle against Ai. Though we sin and deserve to be punished for our sin, God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

When you serve snack, tell preschoolers to not eat until you tell them to do so. After a brief wait, invite preschoolers to eat their snack. Ask if it was hard to look at the snack without being able to eat it. Explain that Achan saw the coat, silver coins, and gold, so he took the items for himself.

God punished Achan for his sin. Achan's sin created sadness for him, his family, and all of Israel.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a time they sinned. Remind preschoolers that **God punished Achan for his sin.** Write *JESUS* over each preschooler's picture. Explain the good news: Jesus took the punishment for our sin. God forgives our sin when we trust in Jesus. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, we are like Achan. We are sinners. God, thank You that You love sinners like us. You love us so much that You sent Jesus to take the punishment for us. Help us to trust You and trust in Jesus. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool*

Journal Page

God the Savior

Key Passage: Joshua 1:9

Big Picture Questions: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb
Numbers 13:1–14:38
Caleb and Joshua trusted God.

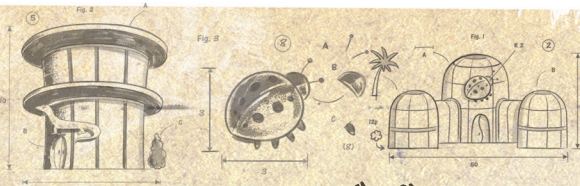
Session 2: The Bronze Snake
Numbers 20:1–20; 21:4–9
God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

Session 3: The Promised Land and Jericho
Joshua 2–4; 6
God led His people into the promised land.

Session 4: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai
Joshua 7–8
God punished Achan for his sin.

Session 5: Joshua's Final Encouragement
Joshua 23:1–24:28
Joshua told the people to worship God.

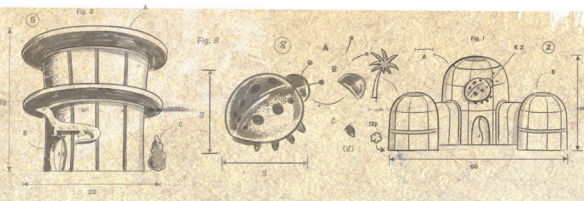




**“Do not be
afraid; do not be
discouraged, for
the LORD your God
will be with you
wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:9

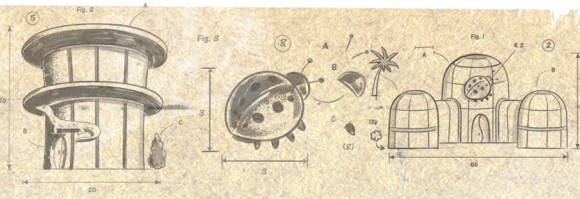




**Be not afraid, neither
be thou dismayed:
for the LORD thy
God is with thee
whithersoever
thou goest.**

Joshua 1:9

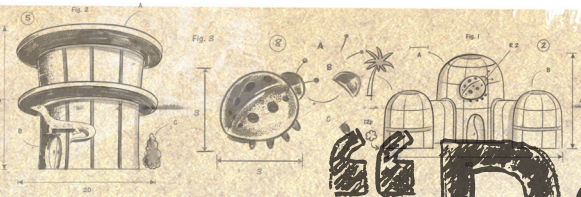




“Do not be afraid
or discouraged,
for the LORD your
God is with you
wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9





**“Do not be
frightened,
and do not be
dismayed, for the
LORD your God is
with you wherever
you go.”**

Joshua 1:9



God punished Achan for his sin.





Find the Items

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the coat, coins, and bar of gold.



KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

BIBLE STORY: ACHAN'S SIN AND THE DEFEAT OF AI

- God had told the Israelites to take nothing from Jericho. Achan disobeyed God and was punished for his sin.
- When Israel attacked Ai, God did not fight for them.
- After Achan was punished for his sin, God fought for His people and they defeated Ai.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How can our sin affect others? Share specific examples.
- Read Proverbs 3:12. Why is discipline loving?

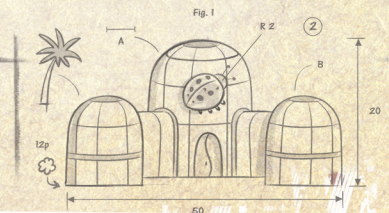
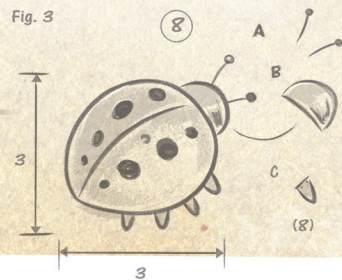
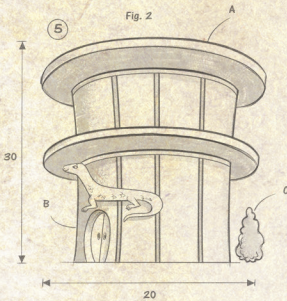
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Invite each person to write down ways he/she has sinned on paper. Destroy the papers, and thank God for His complete forgiveness through Jesus.
- Go further: Drive through your city, praying that people who live and work there turn from sin and trust in Jesus.

Preschool Activity Pages
Unit 7, Session 4



Whom can we trust?



Whom can we trust?

We can trust God.

