Joshua's Final Encouragement

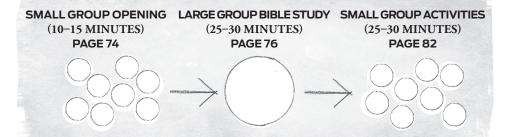
BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 23:1–24:28

MAIN POINT: Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take

care of us.



Leader BIBLE STUDY

Joshua was "getting on in years" (Josh. 23:1), so he gathered together the people of Israel to give an exhortation.

First, Joshua reminded them that God had fought for His people, and He had kept every one of His promises. (Josh. 23:14) Joshua wanted the people to remember and to live their lives based on what they knew to be true about God: God can be trusted. He is good, and He is faithful.

In Joshua 23:6, Joshua issued a challenge: "Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." Reading, studying, and obeying God's Word is a mark of belief in God. Joshua reminded the people that

they were successful over their enemies because of their obedience to God.

Finally, Joshua gave the Israelites a warning. Just as all the good things God promised had been fulfilled, so would all the bad things He promised if the Israelites disobeyed Him. (See Josh. 23:12-13,15.)

Joshua gathered the people at the place where God had made a promise to Abraham. (See Gen. 12:6-7.) Joshua reminded the leaders of the past—from the birth of Isaac to Israel's escape from Egypt. Joshua said, "Choose for yourselves today the one you will worship ... As for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh" (Josh. 24:15).

The Israelites had a choice: Continue to worship God or choose to serve other gods. In response to God's faithfulness to His promises, the Israelites renewed their covenant to be faithful to the Lord.

As you share the story of Joshua's legacy with kids, point them to a greater legacy found in Jesus Christ. After Christ's resurrection, He sent His disciples out to tell the nations about Him. Jesus calls all people who trust in Him to tell others about Him.



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

Joshua's Final Encouragement

Joshua 23:1-24:28

Many years had passed since Joshua and the Israelites had defeated Jericho, Ai (AY igh), and the kings of the land. God allowed the Israelites to rest from battles against their enemies. Now Joshua was getting old and knew he would die soon. He gathered all the people of Israel because he had some important things to say to them.

Joshua said, "You have seen everything the Lord your God has done—He has fought your battles for you."

Then he said, "Be careful to obey everything that is in the book of the law of Moses," and he said, "If you disobey God, He will no longer help you win battles. In fact, you will die here if you disobey Him."

Joshua reminded all the people about the things God had done for them in the past. Joshua reminded them of everything, like when God called Abraham and gave him a son, Isaac, and when God gave Isaac two sons, Jacob and Esau. He reminded them that Jacob's children went to Egypt, where God sent Moses and Aaron.

Joshua told the people about how God had rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians, bringing them safely across the Red Sea and saving them from the Egyptians who were chasing them. Joshua reminded them of the many battles they had fought and won because God was fighting for them. God had done so many great things for His people!

Joshua commanded the people to make a choice. "Fear the Lord and worship Him. If you don't want to worship God, choose to worship the gods your fathers worshiped. As for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh," he said.

The people replied, "We will certainly not abandon the Lord to worship other gods! We know how much God has done for us, and we love Him!"

Joshua warned the people, "If you do abandon God to worship other gods, God will turn against you and harm you. He will destroy you, after all of the good things He has done for you!"

"No!" the people said. "We will worship Yahweh!"

On that day, Joshua made a covenant with the people.

He set up a large stone under an oak tree next to the sanctuary of the Lord.

Joshua said, "This stone will be a reminder of your duty to serve the Lord, who fulfilled every promise in bringing you into this land." Then Joshua sent the people away, and each man went home.

Christ Connection: As Joshua prepared for his own death, he left a legacy of obedience to God. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to the disciples and left them with a legacy: to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded. (Matthew 28:19-20)



WANT TO DISCOVER GOD'S WORD? GET BIBLE EXPRESS!

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Joshua reminded the Israelites that God fought all of their battles. (See Joshua 23:3.) Jesus defeated sin and death when He died and rose again. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information. check out www.lifeway.com/ devotionals

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Joshua's Final Encouragement

BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 23:1–24:28

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KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take

care of us.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, invite them to share about a time they felt encouraged. Explain that *encouraged* means "to feel confidence or hope."

SAY • What kind of words make you feel encouraged? What might you say to someone who needs to be encouraged? Today we are going to hear how Joshua, a leader of the Israelites, encouraged the people.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Legacy List" on the activity page. Challenge kids to list words made from the letters of the word *legacy*. (*ace*, *age*, *ale*, *aye*, *gale*, *clay*, *lace*, *cage*, and so on)

SAY • The word *legacy* means "something left to another person or group of people." A legacy could be physical possessions or a way of living. Today's Bible story is about the legacy Joshua wanted to leave to the Israelites. He wanted them to live a certain way. Let's find out more.

"Legacy List" activity page, 1 per kidpencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Early memories

Direct the boys and girls to sit in a circle. Choose one kid to share something he remembers happening last year. Continue around the circle, allowing each kid to share a memory from the previous year.

Then invite kids to each share a memory from two years ago. Call on a few volunteers to share a memory from when they were 7 years old, 6 years old, 5 years old, and so forth.

SAY • Is it hard to remember events in the past? Why do you think you remember some events and not others? Many things happen that we forget about! In today's Bible story, Joshua reminded the Israelites of the things God had done in the past.

OPTION 2: How to say goodbye

Form two or more groups of kids. Give each group a piece of paper and a pencil. Explain that kids will write down all the ways they can think of to say "goodbye." Prompt them to begin.

After several minutes, invite the groups to share their lists. Award a point for each unique answer. Possible answers include *farewell*, *bye*, *see you*, *later*, *adios*, *bye-bye*, *toodle-oo*, *so long*, and so forth.

SAY • Today, we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a speech Joshua gave to the Israelites. In a way, it was how he said goodbye. He told the Israelites some important things to remember after he died.

Transition to large group

LOW PREP

paperpencils

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Joshua's Final Encouragement

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care of us.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

leader attirename tag

• Bible

 $\bullet \, \text{labeled box} \,$

[Large Group Leader enters wearing a name tag and carrying a Bible. Leader is dressed in a solid-colored polo shirt, khaki pants, and a sun or safari hat. A box is labeled CAUTION: LIVE ANIMALS is positioned at the front of the room. Approach the box. Carefully lift a corner of the lid and then quickly close the box.]

LEADER • Whoa! I don't believe that! [Address kids.] Hi, everyone! I am so glad you are here today to see this massive creature in the box. You know, this animal is so big that I really have no idea how they fit it in this box. That's incredible. Let me give you some hints, and let's see if you can guess what this animal is.

This animal is the biggest land animal in the world. It can lift up to 600 pounds, and its trunk contains around 10,000 muscles. No way! Any guesses? [*Allow kids to guess.*] Yes! An elephant.

You know what they say about elephants, right?

Elephants never forget. Now, I'm not sure how they figured that out, but scientists say that elephants can remember faces. They remember other elephants, even if they haven't seen each other in several years.

That reminds me of our Bible story today. Now, before I tell you more, let's take a step back to look at the big picture.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Last time, we saw how God punished Achan for his sin. Then God fought for His people at Ai.

Who was the Israelites' leader when they entered the

Who was the Israelites' leader when they entered the promised land? (*Joshua*)

That's right. Moses had died before the Israelites entered the promised land, so God chose Joshua to lead. But now Joshua was getting old and he wanted to encourage the Israelites. Listen carefully to hear what Joshua said before he died.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Joshua 23:1–24:28. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video "Joshua's Final Encouragement."

LEADER • Joshua had led the Israelites into the promised land. He was their leader after Moses died. Now Joshua was getting old. He had been through so much with God's people! Joshua had seen all the wonderful things God had done, and he wanted to make sure all the people remembered! So Joshua made a speech.

Let's see how well you listened. Raise your hand if you can fill in the blank.

• Giant Timeline

- Bibles
- "Joshua's Final Encouragement." video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture
 Poster

Write the following words on a chalkboard or dry erase board: *die*; *disciples*; *Egypt*; *obey*; *old*; *Son*; *worship*; *Yahweh*, *the Lord*. Read the sentences below. Kids will choose a word from the list to fill in the blanks:

1. Joshua spoke to the Israelites because he was getting . (old, Josh. 23:1) 2. Joshua said, "Be careful to ______ everything that is in the book of the law of Moses." (obey, Josh. 23:6) 3. Joshua said, "If you disobey God, you will _____." (die, Josh. 23:13) 4. Joshua reminded the Israelites about how God rescued His people from slavery in ______. (*Egypt*, *Josh. 24:5*) 5. Joshua said, "As for me and my family, we will Yahweh." (worship, Josh. 24:15) 6. The people said, "We will worship _____!" (Yahweh, the Lord; Josh. 24:18,21,24) 7. Joshua left a legacy of obedience. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He left a legacy to make ___ of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded. (disciples, Son; Matt. 28:19-20)

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional) Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide I'm a Christian Now for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Joshua 1:9.

Cover the poster and challenge the girls to say the key passage from memory. Then challenge the boys. See who can say it the fastest.

LEADER • Great job memorizing this verse. These are important words to remember. God said these words to Joshua and they can remind us that God is with us too. Let's sing.

Lead kids in singing "Wherever You Go."

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Wherever You Go" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • In the Bible story today, Joshua told the people to make a choice. They could do the wrong thing—worship false gods—or they could do the right thing—worship Yahweh, the one true God. He told them not to do both. Think about that as you watch this video.

Show the "Unit 7, Session 5" discussion starter video.

LEADER • What just happened? Samuel could not decide between sausage gravy or strawberry gelatin, so he just mixed them together and had both. Did everything turn out OK? No way!

God did not want the people of Israel to worship false gods at the same time they were worshiping Him. Only God deserves our worship!

Lead boys and girls to discuss things kids might worship besides God. What would that look like? What could they do about it? "Unit 7, Session 5" discussion starter video

Sing (4 minutes)

 "Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)"song **LEADER** • Let's worship God together by singing. We can sing and praise God for who He is, or we can sing about the wonderful things He has done.

Sing together "Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)."

Big picture question (1 minute)

Word so we could know Him. When we learn about all the things He did in the past and all the promises He made for the future, we discover who God is. He is good and He loves us! And we can definitely trust Him. Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

Pray (2 minutes)

LEADER • I know it can be hard to trust Him sometimes, but when you feel afraid or anxious, pray and ask God to help you. Ask Him to help you trust Him. In fact, let's pray together right now.

Lord God, thank You for the Bible to help us remember the wonderful thing You have done. We know we can trust You to take care of us. Help us trust You. We love You, and we worship You alone. In Jesus' name, amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Joshua's Final Encouragement

BIBLE PASSAGE: Joshua 23:1-24:28

MAIN POINT: Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take

care of us.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Form groups of three or four kids. Point to one group to begin by shouting the first word of Joshua 1:9. Then point to a second group to shout the second word.

Continue pointing to various groups as kids recite the entire key passage. You may choose to vary the speed of pointing between groups as if conducting a band. Repeat as kids master the verse.

SAY • The words of this verse are God's words to which leader? (*Joshua*)

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Use string or tape to mark a line on the floor. Guide kids to stand on the line. Designate one side of the line "false" and the other side of the line "true."

Explain that you will make statements about the Israelites' journey into the promised land. If kids believe the statement is true, they should jump to the "true" side of the line. If false, they should jump to the "false" side. If you prefer to play an elimination review game, any kid who jumps to the wrong side is out.

Read the following statements one at a time to review

- Bibles, 1 per kidMain Point Posterstring or tape
 - Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

this unit's Bible stories. After each statement, instruct kids to reset by returning to the line.

- 1. The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land. (*true*; *Num.* 13:31; 14:1-3)
- 2. The spies reported that compared to the people in the promised land, they felt like grasshoppers. (*true, Num. 13:33*)
- 3. The Israelites complained that there was no air conditioning in the wilderness. (*false, no water; Num. 20:2-3*)
- 4. God told His people to look to the bronze calf to be healed. (false, bronze snake; Num. 21:8)
- 5. God fought for His people and led them into Egypt. (false, into the promised land; Josh. 1:1-6)
- 6. The Israelites entered the promised land by crossing the Nile River. (false, the Jordan River; Josh. 3:14-17)
- 7. God punished Achan for his sin. Then God fought for His people at Ai. (true; Josh. 7:15; 8:18-19)
- 8. Achan denied taking anything from the city of Jericho. (false, he confessed; Josh. 7:20-21)
- 9. Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone. (true, Josh. 24:14)
- 10. The Israelites promised to worship Yahweh. (*true; Josh. 24:18,21,24*)
- **SAY** The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years before God brought them into the promised land. The Israelites needed to conquer the land, so God fought for His people. Joshua led the people and encouraged them to be faithful to the one true God.

All of these experiences taught the Israelites that they could trust God. Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.



 The Gospel Plan Poster printable (optional)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

note cards

markers

 various art supplies (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Speech circle

Instruct kids to stand in a single-file line. Explain that you will announce a topic. The first kid in line should say a sentence about the topic, as if making a speech. Kids may share facts, opinions, or questions related to the topic.

Then the first kid will move to the end of the line, the next kid will say a sentence, and so on, until everyone has had a turn. Play again with a new topic as time allows.

Sample topics:

- favorite Bible stories
- the Old Testament
- God and the Israelites
- the promised land
- The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

SAY • Joshua made a speech to the Israelites at the end of his life. Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone.

OPTION 2: Notes of encouragement

Allow kids to write and decorate notes of encouragement to friends, family members, neighbors, classmates, and so forth. As kids work, remind them that **Joshua encouraged** the people to worship God alone.

SAY • Sometimes people might feel discouraged if they are having a tough day or if they forget about God and the wonderful things He has done. We can help and encourage each other by reminding each other of the truth about God.

God gives us His Word, the Bible, so we can know Him more. We can read the stories about the things God has done to help His people, and we can read about how God has helped us in the best way by sending His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin. That's the best news, and it is so encouraging because we know that God is for us. The Bible says, "If God is for us, who is against us?" [See Rom. 8:31.]

Suggest that kids include the big picture answer on their note cards: *We can trust God to take care of us.* Kids may also write out their favorite Bible verses, or you may suggest a few verses.

Option: Write notes of encouragement to missionaries your church supports.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute pencils and journal pages. Prompt kids to think about what they might say if they could make a speech on national television. What do they think is the most important thing for people to know or remember?

SAY • Before Joshua died, he made a speech to the Israelites. **Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone.** What message do you think everyone needs to hear?

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Remember This!" on the activity page. Kids will decode the message on the stone to find out what the Israelites promised they would do. (Answer: *We will worship Yahweh*.) pencils

- Journal Page
- "Remember This!" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Journal Page

God the Savior

Key Passage: Joshua 1:9

Big Picture Questions: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 13:1–14:38

The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

Session 2: The Bronze Snake

Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

God told His people to look at the bronze snake to be healed.

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

Session 4: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

Joshua 7–8

God punished Achan for his sin. Then
God fought for His people at Ai.

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





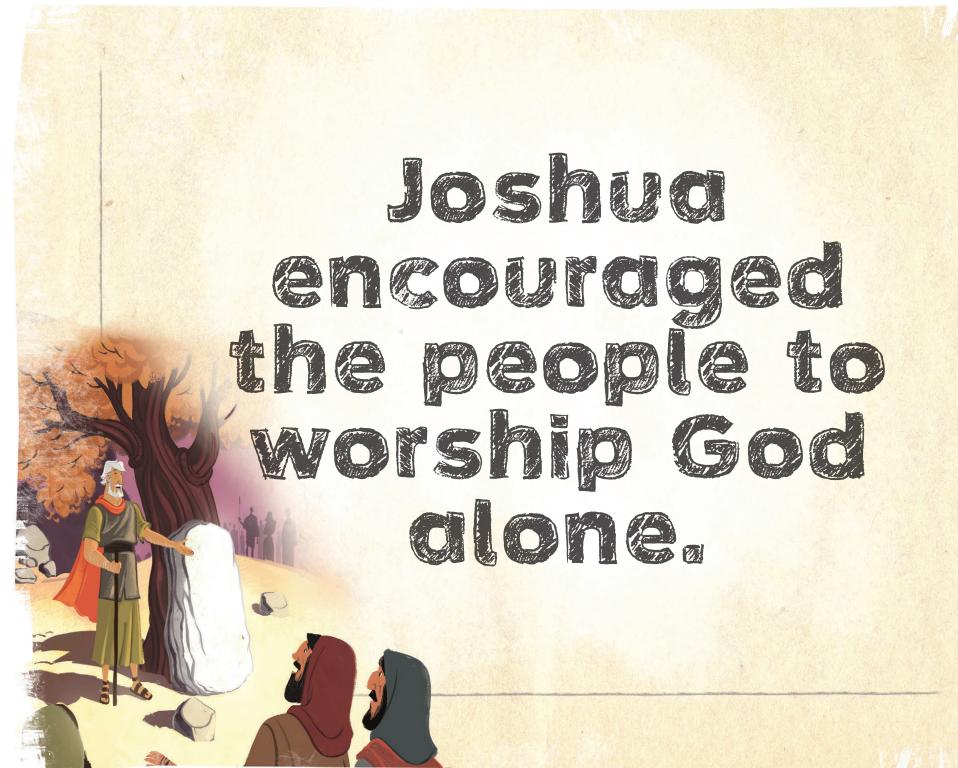


Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with ou wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

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EHave I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with ou wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go " Joshua 1:9





Joshua's Final Encouragement (Joshua 23:1–24:28) • Unit 7, Session 5 • © 2015 LifeWay OK to Print

Journal Page

Imagine you could make a speech on national television. What would you say? List some points below. What do you think is the most important thing for people to know or remember?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What did Joshua remind the Israelites? (He reminded them of all the things God had done for them.)
- What legacy did Jesus leave for His followers? (See Matthew 28:18-20.)
- What has God done for your family? How will you remember to worship Him?



Joshua's Final Encouragement

Joshua 23:1-24:28

MAIN POINT: JOSHUA ENCOURAGED THE PEOPLE TO WORSHIP GOD ALONE.

Joshua was getting old and knew he would die soon. He gathered all the people of Israel because he had some important things to say to them.

Joshua said, "Be careful to obey everything that is in the book of the law of Moses. You will die here if you disobey Him."

Joshua reminded all the people about the things God had done for them in the past. Joshua told the people about how God had rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians. God had done so many great things for His people!

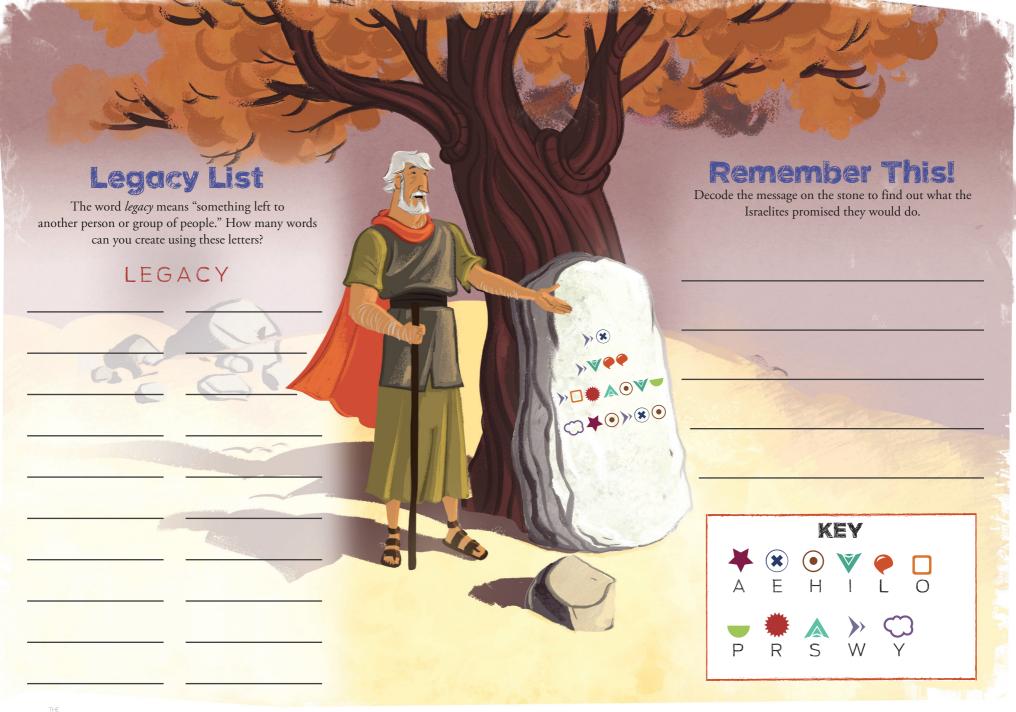
"Fear the Lord and worship Him," he said.

The people replied, "We know how much God has done for us, and we love Him!" The people said, "We will worship Yahweh!"

On that day, Joshua made a covenant with the people. He set up a large stone under an oak tree.

Joshua said, "This stone will be a reminder of your duty to serve the Lord, who fulfilled every promise in bringing you into this land."

Christ Connection: As Joshua prepared for his own death, he left a legacy of obedience to God. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to the disciples and left them with a legacy: to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded. (Matthew 28:19-20)

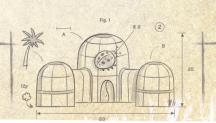




Whom can we trust?

We can trust God to take care of us.





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