

## Joshua's Final Encouragement

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Joshua 23:1–24:28

**MAIN POINT:** Joshua told the people to worship God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Joshua 1:9

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

**SMALL GROUP OPENING**

(15–20 MINUTES)

**PAGE 58**



**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**

(10–15 MINUTES)

**PAGE 60**



**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**

(20–25 MINUTES)

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## Leader BIBLE STUDY

Joshua was “getting on in years” (Joshua 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. (Joshua 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 Joshua 23:12-13,15.)

Joshua gathered the people at the place where God had made a promise to Abraham. (See Genesis 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” (Joshua 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 preschoolers, 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.

5



**MINISTRY GRID**  
training made simple

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

# The BIBLE STORY

## Joshua's Final Encouragement

*Joshua 23:1–24:28*

For many years, the people of Israel did not fight any battles. God gave them peace and rest from their enemies. Now **Joshua was getting very old. Joshua got together all the people of Israel. He had some important things to tell them.**

**Joshua said,** “I am old. You know what God has done for you. When you were in battle, God fought for you!”

Then he said, **“I want you to be strong. Do everything that God told you to do. Do not disobey God’s commands. Do not turn away from God. Trust Him.”**

Joshua said, “I am going to die soon. Remember, God has never broken His promises to you.”

**Joshua reminded all the people about the things God had done for them in the past:** God called Abraham and gave him a son, Isaac. God gave Isaac two sons, Jacob and Esau. **God rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians. God had done so many great things for His people!**

Joshua told the people to make a choice. **“Fear God and worship Him.** If you don’t want to worship God, worship the gods your fathers worshiped. As for me and my family, we will worship Yahweh,” **he said.**

**The people replied,** “We will not leave our God to worship other gods! **We know how much God has done for us, and we love Him! We will worship the Lord, because He is our God.**”

Joshua gave the people a warning, “If you do turn away from God to worship other gods, God will turn against you. He will punish you!”

**“No!” the people said. “We will worship Yahweh!”**

**On that day, Joshua made a covenant, or promise, for the people. He took a large stone and set it up under an oak tree next to the Lord's holy tent.**

**Joshua said, "When you see this stone, remember that you should serve the Lord. God always keeps His promises."** Then Joshua sent the people away, each man went to his own home.

*Christ Connection: Joshua talked to God's people and told them to obey God even after he, Joshua, died. After Jesus died and was raised from the dead, He talked to His friends. Jesus wanted them to tell other people about Him. Now Jesus lives in heaven, and He wants us to tell other people about Him too.*



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

Invite preschoolers 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](http://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.

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## 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

- "How Many People?" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to count the number of people in each row. Then trace the number.

**SAY** • We have heard lots of Bible stories about how God fought for His people and gave them the land He promised them. In today's Bible story, the Israelites were at peace. They did not have any battles to fight. Joshua gathered all the people together because he had something important to say to them.



LOW PREP

Note: Choose one or two actions for younger preschoolers.

## Play out growing up

Invite preschoolers to act out various life stages. Use these suggested actions or create your own.

- Baby [*Cry like a baby.*]
- Kid [*Pantomime your favorite activity now.*]

- Teenager [*Pretend to drive a car.*]
- Grown-up [*Pretend to make dinner.*]
- Elderly person [*Pretend to walk with a cane.*]

Invite preschoolers to perform each action as you call out the life stage. Make it challenging and fun by calling out life stages in quick succession. Consider allowing preschoolers the opportunity to call out the action for the group to perform.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, Joshua was an old man. He knew he would die soon. He had some important things to say to the Israelites before He died. Let's find out what those important things were.

## Remembering beanbag toss

Arrange the Bible Story Pictures from the first four sessions of this unit on the floor. Consider using tape to secure them or placing them in a Giant Game Floor Mat if available.

Invite preschoolers to take turns tossing the beanbag toward the pictures. Invite preschoolers to tell you what they remember about the Bible story depicted in the picture.

Prompt them as necessary.

**SAY** • Great job remembering what we learned in past Bible stories! In today's Bible story, Joshua reminded the Israelites about the great things God had done for them! Let's hear what Joshua had to say.

- Unit 7, Sessions 1-4  
Bible Story Pictures
- beanbag
- Giant Game Floor Mat  
(optional)
- tape (optional)

## 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 tell you what they remember from the last time they came to church as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video  
(optional)

# Large Group LEADER

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## Introduce the Bible story

**SAY** • What do you do when you have something important to say? Do you shout? Do you say, “Listen to me!”? In today’s Bible story, Joshua would soon die, and he had important things to say to God’s people, the Israelites. Let’s hear what he had to say.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Joshua 23.

**SAY** • The Bible is the most important book ever. It tells us what God is like and what He has done. The Bible is God’s Word. We can trust the Bible because it is true.

Show the Bible story video “Joshua’s Final Encouragement” 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

**SAY** • Before he died, **Joshua told the people to worship God.** That reminds us of what Jesus said after He died and was raised from the dead. Jesus told His friends to tell other people about Him. Now Jesus lives in heaven, and He wants us to tell other people about Him too.

- Bible
- “Joshua’s Final Encouragement” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

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

1. What decision did the Israelites have to make?  
(*whom they would worship*)
2. What two choices could the Israelites make about whom they would worship? (*God or false gods*)
3. What did Joshua say would happen if the Israelites worshiped other gods? (*God would punish them.*)
4. Whom did the Israelites say they would worship?  
(*God*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Joshua reminded the Israelites about the great things God had done for them. God proved that He could be trusted to keep His promises. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God.*** God has done great things for us, too. The greatest thing God did for us was give us a Savior—Jesus. By sending Jesus, God proved we can trust Him in all things.

• 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** • God wants to be with His people. God is with us wherever we go—in good times and bad times. We do not have to be afraid or discouraged. We can remember that just like God was with Israel, He is with us wherever we go.

## Transition to small groups

# Small Group ACTIVITIES

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LOW PREP

- "A Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)" song
- "Wherever You Go" song
- instruments (optional)

## Worship through song

Lead preschoolers in worshiping God through song. Sing the unit theme song, key passage song, or another praise song. Take time to explain lyrics to the preschoolers.

Encourage preschoolers to think about the words they are singing as they sing.

**SAY • Joshua told the people to worship God.** One of the ways we worship God is by singing. In the songs we sing, we remember who God is and what He has done for us. The greatest thing God has done for us is sending Jesus. After Jesus died and was raised from the dead, He talked to His friends. Jesus wanted them to tell other people about Him. Now Jesus is alive in heaven, and He wants us to tell other people about Him too. We can tell people about Jesus through music.

LOW PREP

- paper
- markers or crayons

## Draw pictures of people to tell about Jesus

Provide paper and markers or crayons for preschoolers.

Invite preschoolers to think of people they can tell about Jesus. Prompt them by asking about their favorite places to go or activities to do. Help them think of people in those

places whom they could tell about Jesus. Invite them to draw a picture of that person or a picture of them telling that person about Jesus.

**SAY • Joshua told the people to worship God.** God wants all people to worship Him because that is what we were created to do! Like Joshua told the people to worship God, Jesus told His friends to tell other people about Him. We can tell people about Jesus so they can worship Him too.

## Visit the worship center or sanctuary

Walk preschoolers to your worship center or sanctuary. Be mindful of noise, particularly if worship is in progress. If the space is empty invite preschoolers to explore. Explain that believers gather to worship each week to remember God.

**SAY •** Joshua gathered all the Israelite people together to give them an important message. **Joshua told the people to worship God.** Joshua reminded the people of all that God had done for them. We gather in this place each week as God's people to worship Him and remember what He has done for us through Jesus. Then when we leave here, we go out and tell people about Jesus.



## Examine Bibles

Set out an assortment of Bibles for preschoolers to handle. Set out adult Bibles as well as preschool-friendly Bibles.

• Bibles

**SAY •** All these Bibles look different, but all of them say the same thing. The Bible tells us who God is and what He has done for us. When we see all the great things that God has done for His people, we want to worship and obey Him. **Joshua told the people**

**to worship God.** Jesus told His friends to tell others about Him. We can tell our friends about Jesus, too.

## Paint stones

Provide paintbrushes and various paints for preschoolers to paint stones. Set the stones in a safe place to dry.

**SAY • Joshua told the people to worship God.** Joshua set a up a large stone. He told the people that when they looked at the stone, they should remember their promise to serve the Lord. God has done great things for us, too. The greatest thing God did for us was to send Jesus. When we look at these stones, we can remember to tell people about Jesus.

- stones
- paint
- paintbrushes
- cups
- smocks
- wipes for cleanup

## 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.

Provide two options for snack today and invite the preschoolers to choose. Remind preschoolers that Joshua told the people to make a choice: worship God or worship other gods. **Joshua told the people to worship God**, and the Israelites said they would worship God.

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

## Transition

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

Explain that there are more ways to worship God than going to church, reading the Bible, or praying. When we obey God, we are worshiping Him. Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of them worshiping God. Remind preschoolers that **Joshua told the people to worship God**. As we remember who God is and what He has done for us, we will want to worship and obey Him. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • God, You have done so many wonderful things for us! Help us to obey You and help us to tell other people about what You have done for us through Jesus. We love You! 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.

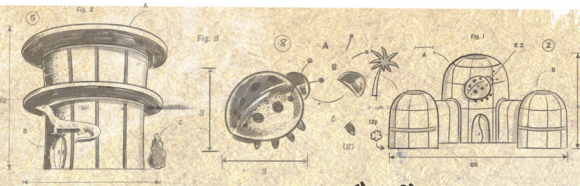
**Session 3:** The Promised Land and Jericho  
*Joshua 2–4; 6*  
God led His people into the promised land.

**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.





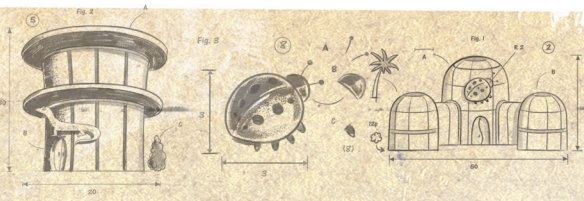


**“Do not be  
afraid; do not be  
discouraged, for  
the LORD your God  
will be with you  
wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:9





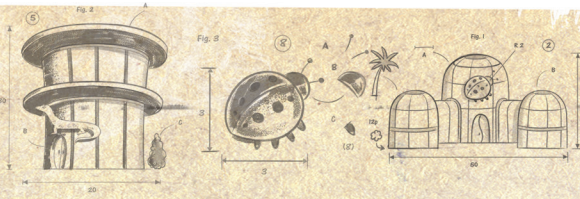


**Be not afraid, neither  
be thou dismayed:  
for the LORD thy  
God is with thee  
whithersoever  
thou goest.**

Joshua 1:9





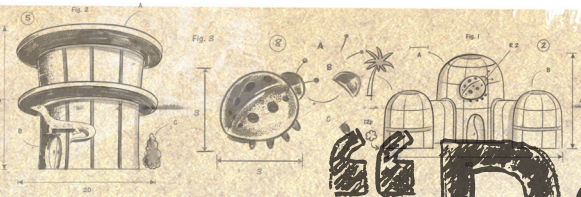


“Do not be afraid  
or discouraged,  
for the LORD your  
God is with you  
wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9







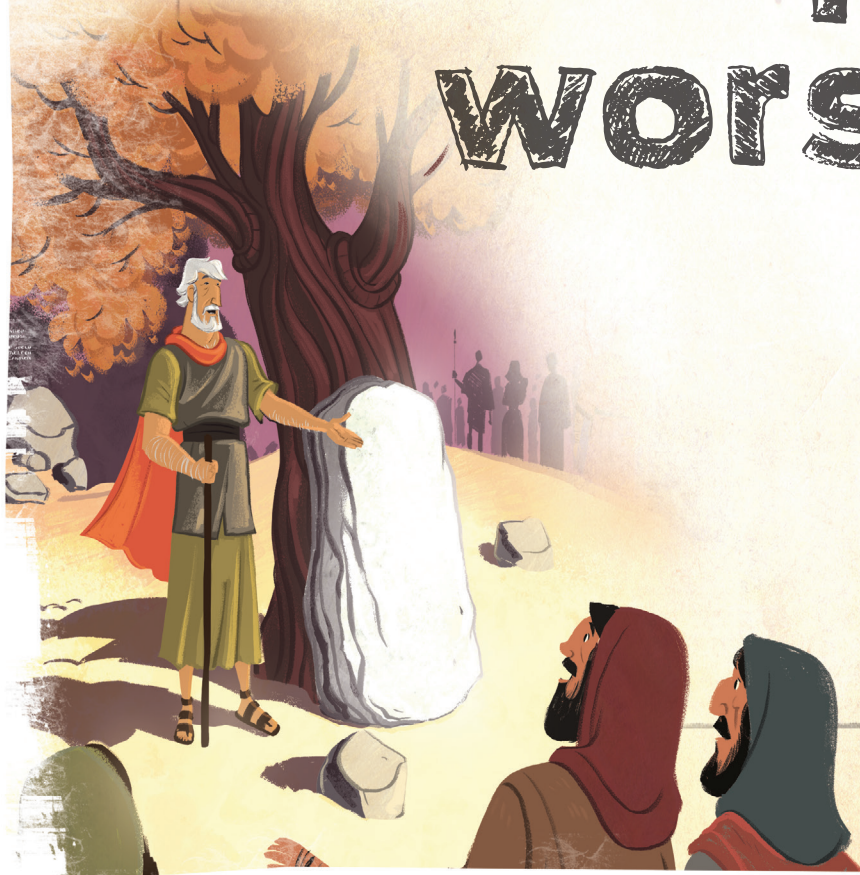
**“Do not be  
frightened,  
and do not be  
dismayed, for the  
LORD your God is  
with you wherever  
you go.”**

**Joshua 1:9**





Joshua told  
the people to  
worship God.









# How Many People?

DOWNLOAD THE  
TGP FAMILY APP

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Count the number of people in each row. Trace the number.



**KEY PASSAGE:** Joshua 1:9

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:**

- Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

**BIBLE STORY: JOSHUA'S FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT**

- When Joshua was old, he gathered Israel together to talk with them.
- Joshua reminded the people of how good and faithful God is.
- Joshua told the people to obey and worship God.
- The Israelites said they would worship and love God.

**FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:**

- How can we talk with someone about Jesus? What should we remember to talk about?
- What are some things we are tempted to love more than we love God?

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:**

- Review the Bible stories learned to this point. Point out examples of God's goodness. Worship together as a family.
- Go further: Send an e-mail or letter of encouragement to an international missionary.

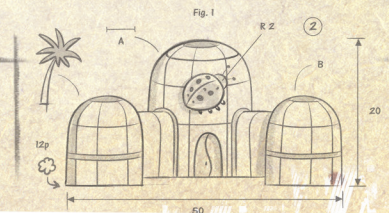
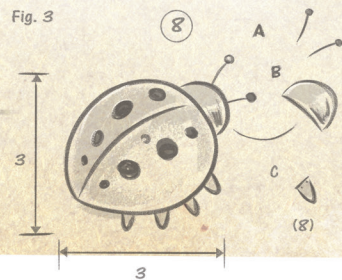
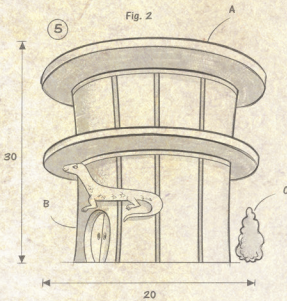
*Preschool Activity Pages*  
Unit 7, Session 5







# Whom can we trust?





# Whom can we trust?

## We can trust God.

