

The Water Stops Flowing

Overview

Materials You'll Need

- footprint pattern and white blank paper
- blue construction or tissue paper
- scissors
- markers



Scriptures

Josh 2:23-3:17; 4:15-18; 5:10-12

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God is powerful and helps His people in need

Behavioral Objective(s)

To identify the things God controls through His mighty power; to give thanks to God for these things

Memory Verse

"The Lord will do wonders among you."
(Josh 3:5)



Bible Knowledge

The Jordan River

The Jordan River means "the descender." It rises from the foot of Mount Hermon and flows into the Dead Sea. As the river flows, there are many twists and turns; and the full length of the river is more than two hundred miles.

Many important events in the Bible involve the Jordan River. In today's lesson, the Israelites crossed the river on dry ground to enter into the land of Canaan. Elijah and Elisha also performed many miracles at the Jordan River. Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist at this very same river.

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River at the time of the year when the water was at its fullest. The Bible records that they crossed on the tenth day of the first month (Josh 4:19), which corresponds to March or April. The waters of the river would have been very full from the melting snow from the rain season. The timing may have been a part of God's plan for a number of reasons. The Canaanites would have been less prepared for an

attack, not expecting many people to be able to get to them. In addition, God wanted to show the Israelites His great power in making the gushing and flowing water come to a standstill.

The Ark of the Covenant

In Joshua chapter 3, the ark of the covenant is mentioned more than 10 times. It was obviously very important. The priests were responsible for carrying it. But they had to carry the ark on poles and were not allowed to touch it. This is because the ark symbolized God's presence among His people; that is also why the people were instructed to keep a distance from it as the priests carried it.

The Canaanites

In Joshua 3:10, seven groups of Canaanites are mentioned. Little is known about many of these people. They were likely divided based on the areas in which they lived. For example, the Perizzites may have lived in the forested areas of central Palestine while the Jebusites lived in Jerusalem.



Understanding Your Students

Trust is developed when one person has to depend on another person. To your students, their parents are the most trustworthy people in this world. It's easy for them to place their trust in their parents because they're visible and they've also had plenty of opportunities to meet the needs of their children. When children are scared, their parents protect them. When they promise their children that they will do something, they try their best to fulfill their promises.

Somehow, though, you will need to teach your students that God is more trustworthy than anyone. He loves them just as their parents do, if not even more. This might be difficult for your students to understand. God is not able to be seen, and His acts of faithfulness aren't always easily observed. This is why

stories from the Bible and personal testimonies are so important. Whenever possible, point out instances where God has been faithful to His people. Recall specific promises in the Bible that God made to His people that He kept. Remind them of God's promised Holy Spirit, and that He will always work for the good of those who love Him. Remind them of the story of Noah, and how God's promise was established by the rainbow. Your students will see that just as God kept His promises to the people in the Bible, He will keep His promises to us, in our lives.

As time goes on, your students will run into occasions where they will need to trust in God. They will recall the discussions on God's faithfulness, remember His promises for them, and have a firm understanding that God will be with them through all.



Vocabulary

Defeat

to beat something

Celebrate

to remember a special time, like birthdays or holidays, by doing special things

Priests

Levites who were responsible for the holy things of God

Ark of the Covenant

a special box that carried the holy things of God, for example the Ten Commandment stone tablets

Officers

the people who were responsible for keeping everyone and everything in order



Before You Teach

God had parted the waters of the Red Sea to let the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 14), and now many years later, He parted the Jordan River to let them enter Canaan. The Israelites crossed the Jordan River in the spring when its banks were overflowing. God chose the time when the river was at its highest to demonstrate His power, parting the waters so that the entire nation could cross on dry ground. This testimony of God's supernatural power served to build the Israelites' hope in God and to give them a great reputation with their enemies, who greatly outnumbered them.

These miracles showed Israel that God keeps His promises. The first generation of Israelites left Egypt forty years ago, and lost their chance to

enter the promised land. Now, a new generation of Israelites was about to experience the fulfillment of a promise that was made to the generation before them. Even after all these years, God's promise holds true. The crossing of the Jordan River is the first fruit of this promise. He was with them at the end of the wanderings just as He was with them in the beginning.

If God kept His promises to the Israelites long ago, and across generations, surely we can trust that He will keep His promises to us today. Usually, in hindsight, we see how God had been constantly by our side through a difficult situation. No matter how hard things seem to be, we can be sure that God is there. History and our own experiences testify that God never breaks His promises and will abide with us. He never lets us down and will always be there to lift us up.



Bible Story

The Israelites Get Ready to Enter Canaan

Last week, we learned that two spies visited Jericho. They were sent to the land of Canaan because Joshua wanted to see what everything was like in this land. The spies found out that the people in the land of Canaan were afraid of the Israelites because they had heard about all the miracles God did for them. The Israelites knew that God was going to help them finally enter into the promised land.

After the two spies gave their report, the Israelites packed up their things at the camp and got ready to enter into Canaan. The Israelites walked some more, and soon, they reached the edge of the land of Canaan. They were almost there! The people were excited and really wanted to have their own land. There was only one more thing they had to do. They had to cross the Jordan River because Canaan was on the other side. But how could so many people, with their children, cross the big Jordan River? No one had ever been there before; how would they even know where to go? God had big plans for the Israelites and a wonderful miracle to show them. He was powerful and He loved them very much.

The Israelites Get Ready to Cross the Jordan

The Israelites decided to camp next to the Jordan River for three days. They probably wondered, "How are we going to cross this river? We have never been here before!" It was the flooding season, which means that the river was very deep, and the water was very fast. On the third day, some officers told the people what to do.

They said, "When you see the Levite priests carry the ark of the covenant past you, gather your things and follow them. If you follow them, you will know which way to go. But be careful and don't get too close to the ark!" Remember, the ark of the covenant was a special box that carried things that belonged to God, like the Ten Commandments. Only the priests were allowed to carry it. Priests are people who work for God, like how pastors work for God today.

After that, Joshua told the Israelites, "Prepare yourselves, because tomorrow God will do amazing things for you!" Something exciting was going to happen tomorrow, so the people got themselves ready for whatever God had planned for them.

The Israelites Cross the Jordan

The next day, the people packed up their belongings and their tents, and Joshua said to all of them, "Come here and listen to God's words! This is how we will know that God is living among us. He will defeat our enemies. The ark will go into the Jordan River ahead of all of us. Once the priests who carry the ark step into the river, the water flowing down the river will be cut off and stop flowing. Then we can all walk on dry ground across to the other side. From this miracle, we will know that God is with us, and that He will keep His promise to us and give us the land of Canaan."

Joshua told them that God was going to make the water stop flowing, so that there could be dry land for the Israelites to walk on! This was a special day because God was going to perform a miracle to show the Israelites that He was with them, and He was going to keep His promise to them. Remember, a long time ago, God promised them that He would take them into the wonderful land of Canaan, and now, God was going to keep His promise.

After Joshua told them what to do, everyone gathered their families, and followed the priests who were carrying the ark. They got very close to the river. Remember, the Jordan River was flooding, which means there was a lot of water moving very fast. Yet, as soon as the priests carrying the ark stepped into the river, the water from up the stream stopped flowing! It piled up in a big heap far away, and now, in front of the Israelites was a dry path for them to walk on. Now they could cross the river! It was just like when God opened the Red Sea for them 40 years ago, when Moses was leading them. Can you imagine what that was like? It was like God stuck His hand out and blocked the water from coming down the river. The priests carrying the ark stood in the middle of the river so that it would keep dry, and all the Israelites walked across the Jordan River. The priests stood there for a long time, until all the people, even the little children, crossed.

After everyone crossed the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark walked across too. After they crossed the river, God let the water go, and it came flowing down fast and strong, just like before! This was the amazing thing that Joshua told the people God would do for them. God would hold back the water long enough for the Israelites to pass

through. But once everyone was safely at the other side, the water would flow again.

The Israelites Celebrate

That day, the Israelites made camp in the plains of Jericho, and celebrated Passover. Do you remember the first time the Israelites celebrated Passover? It was when they were in Egypt still, and God saved His people from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. In the last plague, God had an angel pass over the houses in the land and the angel killed all the first born children of the Egyptians. After this tenth plague, Pharaoh finally let God's people go. The Israelites celebrated Passover because their firstborn children did not die, even though the Egyptians' firstborn children died. To celebrate Passover, they had roasted lamb and special vegetables. Now, they were celebrating it again in Canaan after they crossed the Jordan River because they were remembering that God always saved them when they were in trouble.

Can you imagine how excited the Israelites were! For forty years, they ate only manna, but on this special day, they ate bread and roasted grain! They were able to eat these things because they

could pick the grains from the land of Canaan. Now that they ate from the promised land of Canaan, the manna would stop coming down. God had given them manna in the wilderness because there was nothing to eat there. But now, they could eat the fruit and vegetables of Canaan. They didn't need manna anymore.

God showed that He loved the Israelites by making something so hard, like crossing the mighty Jordan River, easy for them. God also kept His promise to them by taking them across the river into Canaan, and now they were able to enjoy the grains and vegetables of the land. In the next lesson, we will see how God continued to take care of the Israelites, and helped them defeat their enemies. Today's lesson teaches us that God loved the Israelites very much, and always kept His promises to them. He also loves us and helps us too!



Check For Understanding

- 1. What is the name of the river that the Israelites had to cross before they could enter into the promised land?** (River Jordan.)
- 2. What were the priests carrying?** (The ark of the covenant.)
- 3. What happened when the priests stepped into the water?** (The water stopped and the Israelites walked on dry ground through the river.)
- 4. What happened after everybody crossed the river?** (The water flowed back again.)
- 5. Who made this miracle happen?** (Our God is an Almighty God. He led the Israelites across the Red Sea and once again performed a

miracle to let them cross the River Jordan without drowning.)

- 6. What did the Israelites do after they crossed the Jordan River?** (They celebrated Passover by eating from the land of Canaan. They did not have to eat manna anymore.)
- 7. Do you have any testimonies about God helping you or your family? How about sharing with everyone? God wants us to share testimonies because it will help others strengthen their faith. But most of all, God's name is glorified. Therefore, let us remember how God has helped us in times of need. He is the Almighty God.**



Life Application Story

Watching the Stars and the Moon

One night, Benjamin went to David's house to watch the stars with him. Benjamin was very excited because it was his first time looking at the stars using a telescope. Because the stars and planets are so far away, they are hard to see with just our eyes. A telescope is a very powerful instrument that is used to look at stars and planets. Benjamin could not wait to see if they could find bright, shiny stars. David was a few years older than Benjamin but had invited him to his house the last time they saw each other in church.

At first both Benjamin and David could not see the stars with the telescope. Benjamin was disappointed. He thought he had gotten all excited for nothing. But then, David realized why.

"I forgot to turn off the lights," David said. The light in David's room was too bright for them to see the stars clearly. After David turned off the lights, they could see the night sky much better. David moved the telescope around.

"What do you see, David?" Benjamin asked impatiently.

"I see some twinkling stars. Here, you take a look," David said, as he handed Benjamin the telescope.

"Wow, David, I see the stars glowing! They are even prettier and bigger than I thought they would be. Awesome!" said Benjamin excitedly.

"Hey, Ben, have you ever thought about how powerful God is for creating the whole earth and the entire universe, including the stars, the moon, the planets, and the sun?" David asked.

"No, I've never really thought about God's mighty power until now. God is really amazing! The stars are far away and there are so many of them," said Benjamin.

"God is able to hold up each star so it doesn't fall down. Holding up millions of stars is hard, but God makes it look so easy and beautiful! Just looking at the stars tells us that God is real and He is the powerful creator of the entire universe! Let's try to see if we can spot the moon with the telescope," David suggested.

The boys took turns to see the moon with the

telescope.

"Come to think of it, God loves us a lot. He created stars for us to look at and enjoy. The moon also brightens a part of the earth at night, and the sun keeps us warm and gives us light during the daytime. God loves us so much," David explained.

"Thanks for inviting me over, David. I really enjoyed looking at the night sky. At first, I thought I was just coming over to look at the sky. But after looking at the stars, and listening to you, I know God is great," said Benjamin.

"You're welcome. When my parents first got me this telescope, I thought I was just going to have some fun looking out in the sky. But after a few times, I also saw God's power. When everything is quiet and I just sit here staring out the window, it is so peaceful and also very beautiful. God is really great and loves us a lot to give us all these stars and planets to look at."

Benjamin agreed with David and they looked at the stars some more through the telescope.

Questions to Think About

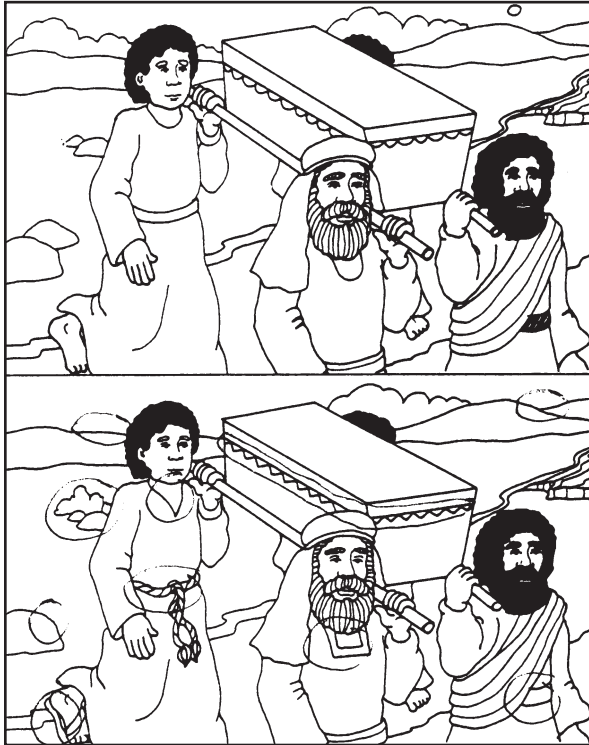
1. **What was Benjamin excited about?** (He was excited about going over to David's house and looking through a telescope.)
2. **What did the two boys see through the telescope?** (They saw stars and the moon.)
3. **What did Benjamin think of God after looking at the stars through the telescope?** (He thought God was great and amazing. No one could ever have made so many stars and keep them twinkling in the sky for so long.)
4. **What do you think of when you see the stars and the moon?** (Allow students to answer.)



Activity 1

Can You Spot the Differences?

Look at the two pictures of the priests holding the ark. There are some things that are different in the second picture. Can you find them? (Answers are circled below.)



Activity 2

What Does God Control?

What does God control? Write down the answer under each picture. How can you give thanks for each of these things? (1. God controls the food that grows. 2. God controls the sun, moon and stars in the sky. 3. God controls the plants, trees and flowers. 4. God controls the four seasons.)



Activity 3

Let's Walk Across the Jordan

Materials:

1. footprint pattern and white blank paper
2. blue construction or tissue paper
3. markers
4. scissors

Directions:

1. Cut out the footprint pattern.
2. Take seven blank white sheets of paper and cut out seven footprints, using the pattern as a guide.
3. Now use a heavy marker and write the memory verse on the footprints, using one footprint per word. "The Lord will do wonders for you."
4. Place the footprints on the floor so that they are arranged in such a way the students can walk on each word in order and be able to recite the memory verse.
5. Now place blue construction or tissue paper around the footprint to create the "Jordan River."
6. Invite each student to take turns and walk on the "dry ground" footprints, as the Israelites did. Remember to ask them say the memory verse as they step on each footprint.

Activity 4:1

Can You Spot the Differences?

Look at the two pictures of the priests holding the ark. There are some things that are different in the second picture. Can you find them?

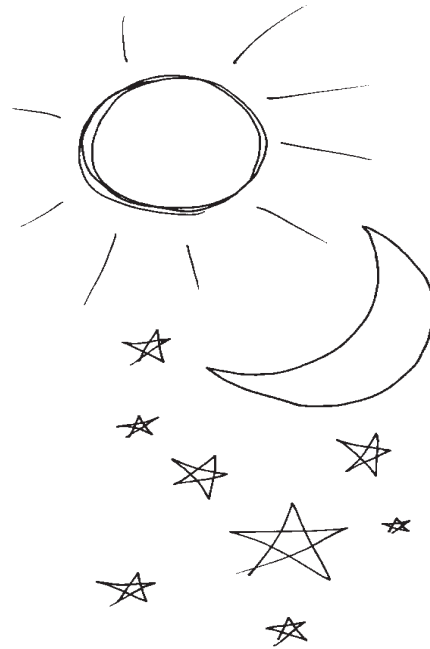
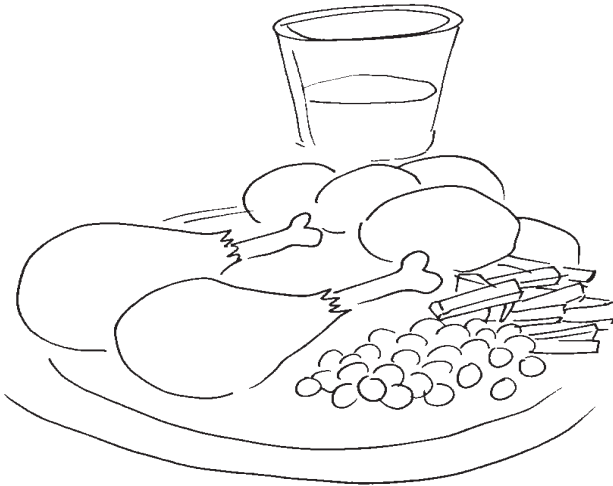


Activity 4:2

What Does God Control?

What does God control? Write down the answer under each picture. How can you give thanks for these things?

1. God controls the _____
that grows.



2. God controls the _____
_____ in the sky.



3. God controls the _____
_____.

4. God controls the four
_____.

Activity 4:3

Footprint Pattern

