

LESSON 9

JOSHUA, RAHAB, AND CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER



OBJECTIVES

1. To be strong and courageous in following the Lord's commandments.
2. To grasp the opportunity to be saved.
3. To make progress in our faith.
4. To remember God's grace in our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

"Only be strong and very courageous that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you."

(Joshua 1:7a)

PRAYER

1. Thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship Him and learn more about His word.
2. We ask God to help us have the courage to follow His commandments even though we are young.
3. We ask God to use His Spirit to change us from within so that we can keep growing in our faith when life situations get more difficult.
4. We ask God to help us count our blessings so that in difficult times, we will remember them.
5. We ask God to help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings in our lives.



Overview

1. Be Strong and of Good Courage

- Joshua is called by God to bring the Israelites to the promised land.
- God promises to be with him, and he is encouraged by God to "be strong and of good courage"
- The two and a half tribes on the east of the Jordan also agree to fight alongside the other tribes.

2. Rahab and the Spies

- Two men are sent to Jericho to spy the land.
- Rahab, a harlot, hides them from the king of Jericho, knowing that the Lord will give them the land.
- The spies give her instructions on how to be saved.

3. Crossing the Jordan River

- The priests carrying the ark step into the water first, before the river stands still.
- Two sets of memorial stones are set up to remember the grace of God.
- The second generation is circumcised at Gilgal.

4. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—Salvation

5. Life Application

- a. Testimony
- b. Real-Life Scenarios

6. Activity—Blessings Journal



Background Knowledge for Teachers

In Joshua 1:12-15, Joshua addresses the two and a half tribes that have already begun to reside east of the Jordan River (Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh). Their background story can be found in Numbers 32. These tribes promised to Moses that they would help their brethren conquer the land west of the Jordan River before returning to their homes.

Jericho was also known as the "city of palm trees" (Deut 34:3). It is located in a valley, approximately five miles west of the Jordan River and six miles north of the Dead Sea. It is 825 feet below sea level, the lowest city in the world. Archaeologists have claimed that Jericho is the oldest city in the world.

The destruction of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites mentioned in Joshua 2:10, can be found in Numbers 21:21-35. Their land was likely the land that the two and a half tribes settled in (cf. Num 21:25, 32, 35).



Reaching Out to Your Students

Your students may begin to feel the effects of peer pressure both at church and at school. They know what is right, but they may start to compromise biblical values (in their speech, in their dress, in their entertainment choices) for the sake of fitting in. In the first part of the lesson concerning being “strong and courageous,” we should remind them that the people in the Bible faced many fears like they do too. However, they relied on God to overcome their fears. We should encourage our students to be strong and courageous to stand up for what is right, even when it may not be a popular choice.

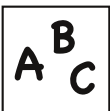
Additionally, your students know about what it means to be thankful, but may have difficulty remembering and counting their blessings. Encourage them to “set up memorial stones” to remember God’s grace in their lives. This may be something as simple as creating a blessings journal. Point out to them not to take things for granted, particularly in spiritual matters. They should be aware of the dates that they were baptized and received the Holy Spirit. Also look at physical matters, as we who live in western, developed nations are much more blessed than people in many parts of the world.



Opener

5 Minutes

Draw a rough map of the Middle East on the white board for the students to write on. Ask the students to come up to the board to label the borders of the promised land as recorded in Joshua 1:3-4 (also see Gen 10:19; Num 13:17, 21-22; 34:3-12). Be sure to label the following locations: The Great Sea, Acacia Grove, Jericho, Gilgal, Euphrates River, Wilderness of Zin, Salt (Dead Sea), Brook of Egypt, Mt. Sinai, and Edom.



Vocabulary

harlot: a person (usually a woman) who engages in sexual acts for money

circumcise: to remove the foreskin that covers a male’s privates; this was the sign of the covenant God established with Abraham



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out the Bible Discovery Worksheet to the students now. As you go over the Bible story, have them look at the worksheet and fill in the answers. The answers have been underlined.

Today, we begin a new section of the Bible. In previous lessons, we had learned about the Israelites in the wilderness: how they received the Ten Commandments, how they built the tabernacle, and how they had worshipped (priests, offerings, and festivals). Today, we fast-forward forty years to when the Israelites were finally about to enter and take possession of the promised land. Now, only the Jordan River separated them from their destination.

Be Strong and of Good Courage

In the past, it was Moses who led the Israelites out of

Egypt. Forty years later, Moses had passed away. God then chose a new leader—Joshua, Moses’ assistant—to lead the people of Israel into Canaan. Class, if you were asked to lead a great nation (over 2 million people), how would you feel? Joshua probably felt very nervous and afraid. There could be many challenges ahead. What kind of enemies would he face? How many eyes were gazing upon him for instruction and leadership?

It is within this context that God encouraged Joshua, saying that He will be with him everywhere he went. In fact, God encouraged Joshua with the same statement three times. What did God say to Joshua each time? “Be strong and of good courage” (Josh 1:6-7, 9). Class, how would you feel if God told you these words before a big task? [Remind the class to refer to the Bible Discovery worksheet here.]

Rahab and the Spies

Later on, Joshua helped prepare the people. The tribes that decided to remain on the east of the Jordan (Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh) reminded Joshua of their promise to Moses: that their mighty men of valor would cross with them, fight alongside them, and conquer the land before returning home. As part of the preparation, Joshua sent two spies ahead of the people to view the land, especially the city of Jericho. This would later be the first city that the Israelites attacked.

The king of Jericho heard about the spies from Israel and sent messengers to search for them, asking Rahab, a prostitute, to reveal the spies who went to her house which was on the city wall. Rather than telling the king's messengers, Rahab took the spies in and hid them. She sent the king's messengers outside the city. Rahab later spoke with the spies, saying, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you" (Josh 2:9). The Canaanites, and especially the citizens of Jericho, had heard about all of God's wonders and signs—the parting of the Red Sea and also the swift destruction of two Amorite kings. Let's also read verse 11. "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." Their "hearts melted" in fear because they knew that it was the work of God. Rahab also confessed her faith in the God of Israel, saying that He was God in heaven and on earth. [Remind the class to refer to the Bible Discovery worksheet here.]

Because of her belief in the one true God, Rahab asked the spies to promise to spare her and her family's lives in return for the kindness she showed to them. The spies agreed since she spared their lives. They were let down by a rope through Rahab's window. The men later instructed Rahab on how she and her household could be saved. She needed to bind a scarlet cord to the window. Additionally, she had to gather all of her household inside the house—anyone who was not inside would not be spared. This symbolizes how we can be saved today. The scarlet cord represents Jesus' blood—we must be covered by Jesus' blood. Also, it is the Lord's will that our whole household be saved (Acts 2:38; 16:31). However, we must follow the Lord's instructions exactly. We all have to be under the same roof. The spies later returned to Joshua saying, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us" (Josh 2:24).

Crossing the Jordan River

The Israelites departed Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan and lodged there. Joshua commanded the people

by saying, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Josh 3:5). This is an important principle to keep in mind. If we want the Lord to be with us and do wonderful things in our lives, we need to be holy. We need to repent and change our sinful behavior. We must be holy because God is holy. [Remind the class to refer to the Bible Discovery worksheet here.]

Later on, Joshua commanded the priests to take the ark of the covenant ahead of them and cross the Jordan first. Joshua commanded that when the priests came to the edge of the water and placed their feet in the water (which was overflowing all its banks at harvest time), the water flow would cut off upstream and stand as a heap. Notice how the priests were 2000 cubits ahead of the people. This symbolizes how we should not walk ahead of God but revere God as the leader of the church. Indeed, the events unfolded exactly as Joshua had commanded. As soon as the priests' feet touched the water, the flow stopped upstream, and the Israelites could cross on dry land. Crossing the Jordan River itself was a symbolic action: it was cutting off the old life in the wilderness; they were to begin living in a new place with a new life. There was no turning back.

In time, according to Joshua's command, two sets of memorial stones were set up: one at Gilgal and another there in the midst of the Jordan River where the priests stood. This second set was done by Joshua himself (Josh 4:9). Only nine and half tribes crossed over the Jordan, yet twelve stones were selected for the memorial stones—this refers to the unity of the Israelite nation. The Jordan River would not serve as a division among the people of Israel. These stones also functioned as markers to remind the people and their children of God's miracle at the Jordan—they crossed the Jordan River completely on dry land! Setting the memorial stones, then, tells us the importance of revisiting the sites of God's work and grace.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Salvation

In Rahab's story, the two spies promised deliverance to Rahab's family if and only if she followed their instructions exactly (Josh 2:17-20). Here, the scarlet cord prefigures the redemptive work of the blood of Christ. If Rahab did not follow the spies instructions exactly, would she and her household have been saved? Probably not. This principle is the same as our salvation today—we must completely follow what Jesus said regarding salvation. This is not merely an intellectual belief or confession of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ; rather, we must physically follow His words concerning salvation (especially concerning water baptism, Holy Communion, foot-washing, etc.). The Ten Basic Beliefs of the True Jesus Church fully summarize these truths concerning salvation. We must remember, Jesus once said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21).



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

1. **Where did the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh live?** East of the Jordan River.
2. **Why did Rahab risk punishment to hide the Israelite spies?** Because she had faith that God had given the Israelites the land, and she wanted to be saved.
3. **What would have happened if Rahab did not follow the spies' instructions to be saved and did something else? What does this mean for us?** She and her family would not have been saved. We also need to have faith in Jesus Christ to follow His teachings on salvation in order to be saved.
4. **Only nine and a half tribes crossed the Jordan River, while two and a half tribes remained on the east of the Jordan, and yet twelve stones were selected for both sets of memorial stones. What do you think that means? What do you think that means for the church today?**
 - A) This symbolizes the unity of the nation. Though a natural barrier (the Jordan river) separated them, the twelve stones symbolized that they were still one nation.
 - B) Today the church is one body (cf. Col 1:24). We must also have a spirit of unity. We are also one body with the other True Jesus Churches around the world, though oceans may separate us. If we hear good news from our brethren around the world, we should rejoice; if we hear bad news from our brethren around the world, we should pray for them (cf. 1 Cor 12:26).

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. Refer to Ex 14 and Josh 3; Moses led them across the Red Sea; Joshua led them across the Jordan River.
2. Moses told them not to be afraid, to stand still, and to see the salvation of the Lord. Joseph told them to sanctify themselves.
3. Moses lifted his rod and stretched his hand over the sea. The priests took the ark of the covenant and stepped into the water.
4. The crossing of the Jordan required more faith. In the crossing of the Red Sea, the people didn't do much of anything. They beheld the miracle of the Lord. In the crossing of the Jordan, they had to physically take action before anything happened—they had to first step into the water.
5. In our journey of faith, our faith must keep growing. In the beginning, perhaps God will spoon-feed us with His grace, but later on, He desires that we grow in our trust in Him. He wishes us to take godly actions even when it may not make sense.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. A Testimony

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #1. The students can read the testimony silently to themselves or aloud as a class. Discuss the questions at the end. Suggested answers have been provided below.]

- 1. How was this brother able to be “strong and courageous” and stand up for his faith?** He did not succumb to peer pressure and just drink “a little bit” or completely “fold” and join in the drinking. He was able to tell people that he didn't drink and was able to find good friends that supported his decision.
- 2. Have you been in a similar situation, where you were pressured to do something that was wrong? How did you respond?** Answers may vary.

2. Real Life Scenarios

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #2. Ask students to read the scenarios, and then discuss the questions that follow as a class. Suggested answers have been provided below.]

Scenario 1

- 1. How can Jimmy be “strong and courageous” to say grace before lunch at school?** He should remember to be thankful for his lunch and that God has blessed him in many other ways too. God looks at his heart and he shouldn't let others keep him from glorifying God.
- 2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you be “strong and of good courage”?** Answers may vary.

Scenario 2

- 1. How can Lori be “strong and courageous” to resist the urge to cheat on the test?** She should remember that it is a commandment not to lie, and that cheating is the same as lying. Also, God is always watching, and He would be very disappointed in her if she followed the crowd and did something wrong.
- 2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you be “strong and of good courage”?** Answers may vary.

Scenario 3

- 1. Did God's grace play a role in Traci getting her allowance money? What should Traci be thankful for in her life?** God has allowed her parents to have jobs to earn money. Traci's money comes from her parents, so God's grace plays a large role in her having allowance money. Traci should remember to be thankful for everything in her life, because it is God who has blessed her with all of it.
- 2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you recognize and remember God's grace in your life?** Answers may vary.

Scenario 4

- 1. What does it mean to you to “grasp the opportunity to be saved”?** Don't let your laziness or lack of motivation keep you from praying for the Holy Spirit, because only those with the Holy Spirit will be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- 2. Have you been in a similar situation as Sam, going to church or praying out of habit instead of truly wanting to? What helped Sam change his view? What can help you “grasp the opportunity to be saved”?** Answers may vary.

Conclusion

What did we learn today? Yes, we learned the importance of being a strong and courageous Christian, ready to answer God's calling, as Joshua was ready to lead the Israelite people across the Jordan River. Also, the Israelites needed to be spiritually cleansed and holy in order to receive amazing grace from God. When God did work wonders among them, they made a point to remember God and what He did. Finally, we learned that, just as Rahab was saved by seizing an opportunity and following the instructions given to her, today, we need to seize the chance to be saved and completely follow what Jesus said regarding salvation.



Activity

Blessings Journal

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To remember the grace of God in our lives, as the Israelites did with the memorial stones.

Materials

- Construction paper
- Blank or lined paper
- Stapler or ribbons/yarn
- Hole punch, optional
- Markers or colored pencils

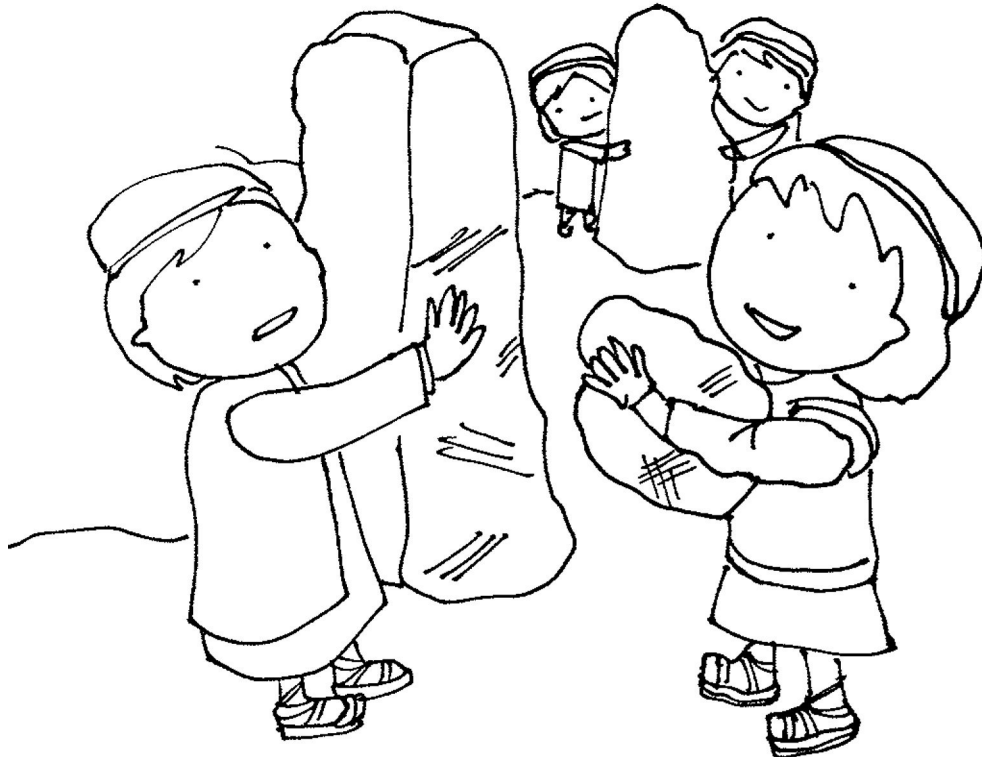
Instructions

1. Using the construction paper and blank/lined paper, make a simple journal and decorate the cover in class.
2. Staple the binding or hole punch the edge and string the pages together using ribbon or yarn.
3. Have the students write something that they are thankful for every day in the coming week. Check the journal the following week. If possible, ask the students to write in it weekly for an indefinite period of time.

Note: Teachers can practice this for a week on their own and show the students an example.

JOSHUA, RAHAB, AND CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

1. "Be _____ and of good _____" (Josh 1:6-7, 9).
2. These tribes dwelt on the east of the Jordan: _____, _____, and _____.
3. "And as soon as we _____ these things, our _____; neither did there remain any more _____ in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is _____ in _____ and on _____" (Josh 2:11).
4. " _____ yourselves, for _____ the Lord will do _____ among you" (Josh 3:6).
5. One set of memorial stones was set up at _____; the other was set up in the middle of the _____.



A Testimony

The testimony is about a brother's reflection on his life in college. Through this testimony, we can learn the importance of relying on God to build up the courage to stand firm in our faith. We too can overcome tempting situations! Be strong and courageous!

From the beginning of college, I was a student-athlete on an NCAA varsity sport team and an intercollegiate club sport team. After two years, I decided it would be better to concentrate on academics, so I relinquished my status with the NCAA. However, I continued to participate on the club sport team, since practices and tournaments were not as time-consuming. During sport team parties, I would often find myself in situations where alcohol was easily accessible. In such situations, there are at least two obstacles to overcome. The first is your own desire to drink. The second is the pressure from your friends or peers to drink.

Concerning one's own desire to drink, I am blessed in not having a taste for alcohol, and even find the taste of ethanol or yeast fermentation unpleasant. Thus, I never found the idea of drinking that appealing. However, for others who do not see eye-to-eye with me on this, the question then becomes, "What is the purpose of drinking?" "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Cor 10:23). However, many people point out that Christ drank wine too, and thus was called a winebibber when He came eating and drinking (Lk 7:33-34). Additionally, the Bible rebukes drunkenness but not the consumption of alcohol. In understanding this, one must come to see that drunkenness is not a sudden onset that occurs after consuming a certain amount of alcohol, but a gradual process, starting with drinking small amounts. Therefore, preventing drunkenness depends on each individual's self-control and awareness of what he/she is drinking. As we have been taught, the best way not to fall into temptation is to never encounter it in the first place. Following this reasoning, the best way not to mistakenly get drunk is not to drink in the first place.

Concerning the peer pressure to drink, I was not fortunate enough to be on athletic teams where my teammates felt the same way as I did. Most people, I think, are not fortunate in this regard. However, from my experience, people are much more understanding than we expect. At the beginning of my first semester, both teams were having parties to welcome the freshmen. I was initially anxious about what would happen when I told everyone that I don't drink. Of course, I thought that they would make me the topic of many jokes for a long time, but I found the opposite to be true. From their reactions, I found most of them to be very understanding. The most challenging step was gathering the courage to stand firm instead of trying to sneak by with drinking a little bit or just completely folding. It also helps to befriend other students who feel the same way as you about drinking. I have found this to be a very effective way of avoiding the temptation to drink.



However, no matter what the circumstances are, we must always remember that it is God's strength on which we must rely. Alone, we have no power to overcome temptations or stand firm in our beliefs. It is only by the grace of God that He strengthens us.

Questions for Discussion

1. How was this brother able to be "strong and courageous" and stand up for his faith?

2. Have you been in a similar situation, where you were pressured to do something that was wrong? How did you respond?

Real-Life Scenarios

Jimmy is having a terrific start to the new school year as a 5th grader. He's made a new group of friends. Jason, in particular, is a lot of fun to sit with at lunchtime. Jason always has the funniest jokes and stories to share. On several occasions, Jimmy is so engrossed in chatting with Jason that he accidentally forgets to say grace before lunch. Without realizing it, Jimmy gradually gets used to not saying grace. When he does remember, he is surprised at how self-conscious he feels about it! His solution is to blink a long blink and hurriedly say a short prayer. Jimmy doesn't want his new friends seated around him to notice. He knows that if they did, they'd ask what he is doing and why. Then, he'd have to explain all sorts of things such as the fact that—that he is a Christian and the reason why he needs to say grace. He doesn't want to be different from everyone else. Nobody he knows at school actually prays or says grace before they eat. So, why should he?



Questions for Discussion

1. How can Jimmy be “strong and courageous” to say grace before lunch at school?
2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you be “strong and of good courage”?

Lori is worried. Normally, she does well on math tests, but today, she does not feel so confident. Lori didn't study much last night for today's big test. Now, she is struggling a bit, unsure of how to answer some of the questions on the test. She looks up at the clock, hoping that the answers will come to her, when something unusual happens. Another teacher comes into the classroom and asks to talk to Lori's teacher. The two teachers talk for a very short time, but to Lori's surprise, several students immediately take advantage of the situation by looking at others' tests papers for answers. Lori cannot believe her eyes! People are cheating on this test! What's more amazing is that the teacher does not seem to notice at all! Suddenly, Lori feels an urge to cheat, too. She knows it's wrong, but she feels desperate today. She reasons that she'll do it just this once. Besides, she's not alone, as quite a few of her classmates are cheating. It's only fair, isn't it?



Questions for Discussion

1. How can Lori be “strong and courageous” to resist the urge to cheat on the test?
2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you be “strong and of good courage”?

For three weeks, Traci worked hard to complete all her chores at home so that she could get a big allowance. She'd been saving up to buy a special watch that every 6th grader seemed to want. When her mother gave her the money, Traci was thrilled. With the latest allowance money, she had just enough to buy the watch! But that was only if she skipped tithing. For a brief moment, the idea of not giving tithe this time crossed her mind. Traci was entertaining the thought when her mother abruptly interrupted it. "Don't forget to give tithe with your money," Traci's mother said while patting her gently on the shoulder. "And remember to thank God for the money and grace in your life," she continued. Yes, Traci's parents had taught her about giving a tenth of everything to God. She'd always done it because it was the right thing to do. But what struck a wrong chord this time was her mother's reminder to remember God's grace. "I worked really hard for this money," Traci thought to herself. "It was my hard work, not God's grace, which produced this money!" Traci felt a little irritated that her mother didn't give Traci any credit for earning the money. She wondered to herself, "What does God's grace have to do with this?"



Questions for Discussion

1. Did God's grace play a role in Traci getting her allowance money? What should Traci be thankful for in her life?
2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? How did you respond? What can help you recognize and remember God's grace in your life?

Sam can't remember a time when he wasn't a Christian. He was baptized as an infant and church has always been a part of his life. Every week, he attends church services and RE classes. He reads the Bible and does his homework. He prays, too, though not for a long time. Sam knows that he should pray for the Holy Spirit and he does. But just like everything else related to church, Sam seems to do it out of habit rather than a real, self-driven desire. Yes, he knows that a Christian needs to have the Holy Spirit to go to heaven, but he can't muster a sense of urgency to pray for it. "There are so many prayer sessions and chances to pray for the Holy Spirit," Sam thinks to himself. "I have plenty of time and besides, I'm so young. I know that I will receive the Holy Spirit someday." Then something happened that completely changed his view. One day, his mother received a phone call. It was his best friend's mother. "Jack is in a really bad car accident," Jack's mother sobbed. Shortly after, Jack's mother dropped off Jack's younger sister at Sam's house before she went to the hospital. Sam later found out that Jack was with his father and a drunk driver hit the side of the car where Jack was sitting. Jack nearly died. It took months for him to get better. Only then did Sam realize that even kids could die suddenly. Sam still doesn't understand what death means, not completely. But he knows that once someone dies, s/he no longer has a chance to live or pray for the Holy Spirit. That means s/he no longer has the chance to go to heaven. After what happened with Jack, Sam no longer prays for the Holy Spirit out of habit only. He knows that he needs to grasp every chance to pray, because his opportunity to go to heaven is at stake.



Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to you to "grasp the opportunity to be saved"?
2. Have you been in a similar situation as Sam, going to church or praying out of habit instead of a self-driven desire? What helped Sam change his view? What can help you "grasp the opportunity to be saved"?

E2 Year 1 Book 4 Lesson 9—Joshua, Rahab, and Crossing the Jordan River

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Joshua 1:7a)**

Short Answer

1. Compare and contrast the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 14) with the crossing of the Jordan River (Josh 3). Who was leading them each time?

2. What did the leaders say before the miracle happened? (Ex 14:13-14; Josh 3:5)

3. How did the sea part or the river stop flowing—what were the actions that took place?

4. Which event required more faith of the people? Why?

5. What does this tell us about growing in our faith?