

Trusting God

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: Fully Relying on God: Loyalty Counts!

Scripture: Joshua 24:1-3

Memory Verse: Joshua 24:2 '...Your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, and they served other gods.'

The Children's Sermon

Hey kids, today we're going to talk about a really cool story from the Bible. It's about a man named Joshua and something very important called the covenant renewal.

So, who was Joshua? Joshua was a leader, chosen by God to help the Israelites, God's special people, go into a land that God promised them. Joshua was strong and brave, but he knew that all his strength and courage came from God.

Now, let's dive into the covenant renewal. This happened when Joshua was very old. He gathered all the people together and reminded them of everything God had done for them. He talked about how God helped them escape from Egypt, where they were slaves, and how God did amazing things to keep them safe.

Joshua told the people that it was time to make a big choice. They could choose to follow God, who had done so much for them, or they could choose to follow other gods, which wouldn't be a good choice at all. This was a very important moment, called the covenant renewal. It was like making a promise or a deal with God to follow Him and only Him.

Joshua said to the people, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." That means Joshua and his family decided to follow God, and he was asking the people to make the same choice.

Why is this story important for us? Well, just like Joshua and the Israelites, we have choices to make every day. We can choose to be kind, to listen to our parents, to help our friends, or to share our toys. When we make good choices, it's like we're choosing to follow God, just like Joshua did.

The covenant renewal teaches us that following God is the best choice we can make. It's not always easy, but God promises to be with us, just like He was with Joshua and the Israelites. God helps us to be brave and strong, even when things are hard.

Now, let's think about how we can make good choices like Joshua. Maybe we can help our parents without being asked, or we can share our favorite snack with a friend. Every good choice we make is a way to show God that we want to follow Him.

And remember, when we make mistakes, it's okay. God still loves us and forgives us. We can always ask God to help us make better choices next time.

So, kids, let's try to be like Joshua and choose to follow God every day. Let's be kind, brave, and make good choices, knowing that God is always with us, helping us along the way.

PRAY: God, help us to remember that all of our power comes from you and you alone are all we ever need. Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

Joshua 24:2 '...Your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River, including Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, and they served other gods.'

You Will Need:

- Map of the Near East (including the Euphrates River)
- Stickers or markers
- Printouts of ancient idols and one of Abraham

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials and set up a 'journey' station with the map prominently displayed.
- Prepare the printouts of ancient idols and Abraham by cutting them out and making sure there are enough for each child.

Do This:

1. Start by reading Joshua 24:1-3 together as a class, focusing on the memory verse. Discuss the significance of Abraham's family serving other gods before God called him.
2. Give each child a sticker or marker. Have them place it on the map where they think the Euphrates River is, discussing the importance of the river in ancient times.
3. Hand out the printouts of ancient idols and Abraham. Ask the children to 'leave behind' the idols by placing them in a box marked 'Past' and 'follow' Abraham by placing his picture near the Promised Land on the map, symbolizing leaving behind old ways and following God.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Bibles or printed copies of Joshua 24:1-3
- Large map of the Middle East or a printed map showing the journey of the Israelites
- Small stones or pebbles
- Permanent markers
- A large bowl or container

Get Ready:

- Print or ensure you have enough copies of Joshua 24:1-3 for each child.
- Set up the map on a wall or table where all the children can see it.
- Write key locations from the Israelites' journey (e.g., Egypt, Red Sea, Mount Sinai, Jordan River, Jericho) on the map.
- Place the bowl or container in the center of the room.
- Distribute several stones or pebbles to each child.

Do this:

1. ****Introduction to Joshua 24:1-3****: Start by reading the scripture together. Discuss Joshua's role and how he reminded the Israelites of God's faithfulness throughout their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Emphasize the importance of loyalty and fully relying on God.

2. ****Mapping the Journey****: Have the children come up to the map one at a time. Ask them to place a stone on the map at a location that is mentioned in Joshua 24:1-3 or during the recount of the Israelites' journey. As they place their stone, they should say a brief sentence about what God did for the Israelites at that location (e.g., "God parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape from Egypt").

3. **Commitment Stones**: After the mapping activity, have each child take one of their remaining stones and a marker. Ask them to think about a way they can show loyalty and reliance on God in their own lives. They will write a word or draw a symbol on their stone that represents their commitment to God. Examples could include "Trust," "Pray," "Faith," or a simple cross or heart.

4. **Offering of Stones**: Conclude the activity by having the children place their commitment stones in the large bowl or container as an offering to God. As they place their stone, encourage them to say a short prayer silently or aloud, dedicating their commitment to God.

This activity combines a tactile learning experience with a spiritual commitment, helping children understand the importance of loyalty to God and remembering His faithfulness.

Snack Activity: Promised Land Milk & Honey Parfaits

You'll Need:

- Vanilla yogurt
- Granola
- Honey
- Clear plastic cups
- Spoons

Get Ready: Gather all your materials and set up a clean workspace with enough room for each child to build their parfait.

Do this:

1. Begin by discussing Joshua 24:1-3, focusing on how God fulfilled His promises to the Israelites by bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey. Explain how this snack represents the sweetness of trusting and being loyal to God.
2. Have each child fill the bottom of their clear plastic cup with a layer of vanilla yogurt to represent the milk.
3. Next, let them add a layer of granola to represent the earth of the Promised Land.
4. Drizzle honey over the granola to symbolize the honey of the Promised Land and the sweetness of God's faithfulness.
5. Repeat the layers until the cups are filled to the top, ending with a final drizzle of honey.
6. As they enjoy their parfaits, encourage the children to discuss ways they can show loyalty and trust in God in their daily lives.

Game Activity: Joshua's Journey: Loyalty Leap

You'll Need:

- A large open space (preferably outdoors)
- Chalk or tape to mark the ground
- Index cards with various challenges or questions related to Joshua 24:1-3
- A small prize or token for participants who complete the journey

Get Ready: Mark a start and finish line in your open space. Between these lines, create a series of 'stepping stones' using chalk or tape. These stones should be spaced far enough apart that children must leap from one to another. Write or print challenges and questions related to Joshua 24:1-3 on index cards and place one by each stepping stone.

Do this:

1. Explain to the children that they are on a journey to fully rely on God, just like Joshua. Their goal is to leap from stone to stone, facing challenges along the way that will test their loyalty and trust in God.
2. At each stone, a child must answer a question or complete a challenge related to the scripture before leaping to the next stone. If they are unsure, they can say a quick prayer for guidance, symbolizing reliance on God.
3. Once a child reaches the end of the journey, they receive a small prize or token to remind them of their commitment to fully rely on God. Celebrate each child's journey and discuss as a group what they learned about loyalty and trust in God from Joshua 24:1-3.

Craft Activity: Fully Relying on God: Loyalty Counts!

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- A printed map of the ancient Near East (optional)

Get Ready: Before the activity, print or draw a simple map of the ancient Near East, highlighting the area where Joshua and the Israelites would have been. This will help the children visualize the setting of Joshua 24:1-3.

Do this:

1. Read Joshua 24:1-3 together as a class. Discuss what it means to fully rely on God and how Joshua and the Israelites showed their loyalty to God.

2. Have each child choose a color of construction paper to represent their commitment to being loyal to God, just as Joshua and the Israelites were. They will then cut out a sandal shape from the construction paper to symbolize walking in the path of loyalty and faithfulness to God.
3. On another piece of construction paper, the children will draw or write what loyalty to God looks like in their daily lives (e.g., obeying parents, praying, reading the Bible). They will glue the sandal shape onto this paper as a reminder to walk in loyalty to God every day.
4. If time and resources allow, use the map of the ancient Near East to show where Joshua made his declaration of loyalty to God. This helps connect the physical journey of the Israelites with the spiritual journey each child is encouraged to take.

Prayer Activity: Fully Relying on God: Loyalty Counts!

You'll Need:

- A large map or poster of the ancient Near East
- Small stickers or markers
- Copies of Joshua 24:1-3 for each student

Get Ready: Prepare the large map or poster by marking significant locations mentioned in Joshua 24:1-3, such as the Euphrates River, Haran, Egypt, and the land of the Amorites. Ensure each student has a copy of Joshua 24:1-3.

Do this:

1. Read Joshua 24:1-3 together as a class, emphasizing the journey of God's people and the faithfulness of God throughout their history.
2. Discuss what loyalty to God looked like for Joshua and the Israelites and what it looks like for us today. Encourage students to share their thoughts.

3. Using the map, have students place stickers or markers on the significant locations as they are mentioned in the scripture reading. This will help them visualize the journey and understand the context of the scripture.
4. Conclude with a prayer circle, inviting students to pray for the strength to be loyal to God in their own lives, using Joshua's story as inspiration.