Crossing the Jordan River: Joshua Leads the Israelites into the Promised Land
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA
From River Community Church Prairieville, Louisiana
Copyright 2004 Amy Crane. Permission granted to freely distribute and use, provided the copyright message is included.

Drama Workshop:

Scripture: Joshua 1-6 and 23-24

Memory Verse: Joshua 24:14-15 (NIV)
“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Bonus Verse: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10 (NIV)

PURPOSE: The children will hear the story of Joshua’s obedience to God and the people’s trust in God as He leads them across the River Jordan and knocks down the walls of Jericho. The children will then have an opportunity to retell the story by creating their own dramas.

FILED TEST NOTE: This was a fun workshop😊, and the children (even the younger ones) were quite creative. We only had enough children one week to divide into two groups (with 4th and 5th graders) and it was really interesting to see how they took the same things and came up with completely different productions.

Additional objectives for the drama workshop
By the end of the session, the students will
• have had an opportunity to listen to directions and practice obedience.

Teacher preparation in advance:
• Read the scripture passages and lesson plan and attend the Bible Study,…
• Prepare a closing prayer.
• Learn to retell the story in your own words (sample story included in this lesson plan).
• Learn the memory verse.
• Confer with the Shepherd on age level adjustments needed each week (those included in the lesson plan and your own). Consider the “Stretchers” you can use, especially with the youngest children.
• The design of this workshop is very intentional. The activities and discussion questions for this workshop were designed to meet the goals of the entire rotation. While we feel it is important to follow the serendipitous leading of the Holy Spirit, please do not change the lesson plan without consulting a Curriculum Planning and Writing Team member.
• Check out the room before your first Sunday workshop so that you know where everything is located.
• Discuss with the Shepherd your action plan for the dramas. Get suggestions for dividing the class into two groups; find out who should not be together. Agree on a signal for when your group is almost done.

Set-up:
You will want to provide the children with lots of space for their dramas. When the children arrive, the chairs should be in one big circle. The two groups can move their chairs into smaller circles at opposite ends of the room (or better yet, see if one group can work in another space outside the classroom so they don’t distract each other).

Supply List
• Two laundry baskets, each with the following things in them (should be close to identical collections): multiple pairs of sunglasses, toy musical instruments, blue towel, white sheet, 12 pieces of newspaper, piece of paper with the Ten Commandments written on it, assortment of hats and scarves, red ribbon, baby’s stacking cups (the graduated sized ones that nest), toilet paper tubes.
• Cardboard blocks or boxes (assorted sizes of boxes are okay; they don't have to be big or neat or plain)
• Kazoos for everyone (ones they can take home so germs don’t need to be shared). Available from a variety of sources, including Oriental Trading: http://www.orientaltrading.com or 800-228-2269.
• Several sets of index cards with the memory verse written on them, one word on each card.
• Memento: the kazoo (see above)
• Digital Camera and printer or Polaroid Camera
• Shepherd Time: sheet with the memory verse preprinted on it (sample attached), pencils, markers.
PRESENTATION:

OPEN:
 Welcome and Introductions:
 Greet the children and introduce yourself. Wear your name-tag. (Remember, you are interacting with a different group of students each week who may not know you.) Make sure the children are wearing name-tags.

Explain the purpose of this workshop: Today you will hear the story of Joshua leading God’s people into the Promised Land and then you will have an opportunity to put together a drama of that story.

Scripture/Bible Story:

To understand today’s story, you need to know what the Ark of the Covenant is. Does anyone know? [It is a gold box, decorated with angels, which God directed Moses to have made. It was used to carry the tablets with the Ten Commandments and also a jar of manna. It served as a reminder of God’s constant presence and protection.]

Tell the story: “In a moment we will read a small portion of a long story. But first, listen as I retell the story from the Bible.” [Retell the story in your own words, emphasizing that the story comes from the Bible; holding your Bible while you tell is a reminder to the children that they are hearing God’s word. A sample retelling is attached. Make sure your retelling includes: God’s call of Joshua and reassurance, the Ark of the Covenant, stopping of the Jordan River, the Remember stones, the spies, the marching around Jericho, and then the fall of Jericho.]

Read the scripture: “Now, let’s read a small portion of our story for this rotation. Open your Bibles to Joshua 3:6, 9-17; 4:1-3, 19-24. (Younger children: Joshua 3:6, 14-17; 4:19-24.)

[Encourage the children to use their Bibles in looking up verses. For example, “Our story about Joshua is in the book of Joshua. It is in the Old Testament and follows the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Our passage is in the third chapter; look for the big bold numbers that indicate chapters. The smaller numbers at the beginning of sentences in the chapters are verse numbers.” We restate information about Bible organization in each workshop to be sensitive to visitors]
and new children in the class who may not have any knowledge of the Bible. We never want a child to feel like they do not belong because they do not know this information before they come to class.]

**DIG:**

**Warm-up exercises:** (do the first activity; do the others if time permits)

Just as athletes, dancers and musicians warm up before doing their activities, actors need to warm up. Let's exercise our drama muscles — our imaginations.

· Everyone mime: stepping into the cold River Jordan while carrying the Ark of the Covenant, climbing out of a window and down a rope, blowing trumpets, watching walls come tumbling down.

· A volunteer (or the teacher) is Joshua, and must explain to the Israelites what the “plan of attack” is. The other students are the Israelites and ask questions about the plan and comment on its absurdity and suggest alternatives.

· Have a volunteer be a guard on the Jericho city wall, reporting to the rest of the guards what happened during his watch (Israelites marched around once without attacking). The other students are his coworkers and ask questions about what he saw and speculate about what the reason for this strange action may be.

**Application:**

Divide the class into two “teams.” Give each drama team a basket of supplies and instruct that EVERYTHING in it must be used to tell the story. How they use it is up to them. The dramas do not need to be long, but they should tell as much of the story that the children just heard as possible.

The Shepherd should work with one group and the Workshop Leader with the other. The adults should keep the process and planning moving along and should help negotiate when there is a difference of opinion. Remind the children if they forget a part of the story, but the kids should plan the drama.

If need be, divide the list of events that occur in this story up between the groups and have them act out a certain event.
Take a photo - digital or polaroid of each scene as it is presented. Have the children “freeze” and snap their picture. These will be used at the end of the lesson for their Faith Journals.

After about 10-15 minutes of planning, have each team put on its story. Remind the other group to watch with the same courtesy they expect when it is their turn to perform.

**REFLECT:**
**Pulling it all together (closing discussion):**

· What do you think the Israelites shouted before the walls tumbled? (Joshua 6:5, 20) Do you think the walls would have fallen if they had not followed the instructions?

· Have you ever been asked to do something that seemed silly or pointless but turned out to be a good thing to do?

· Are we, as Christians, asked to do some things that don’t make sense to the rest of the world?

· Has anyone ever made fun of you for doing what you thought was the right thing? How did you feel? What did you do?

**Review the memory verse.**

Make two sets of index cards with one word from the memory verse written on each card. Divide the children back into the two or more groups (there should be no more than five in each group; if necessary, rearrange who is in each group). Give each group a set of index cards. Have the groups race to see who can put the words in the correct order in the shortest amount of time.

At 10:40 a.m. ask the Shepherd to pass out the journal pages and pencils/glue. Suggestion: Remind the children that they can keep their kazoos as a memento — a reminder of the story and activity.
Shepherd Time:
Review the memory verse. Talk about what it means. Then give each child a journal page with the memory verse already written on it. Ask each child to illustrate the verse with a scene from the story or list times God can help him/her be strong (especially older children) or draw a picture of a time he/she was strong with God’s help or select a picture from today to glue onto his or her paper and describe the scene that was taking place.

This is meant to be a time of reflection and introspection. Talking, thinking and writing about faith helps clarify lessons. In addition to the suggested activity, children may draw pictures relating to today’s scripture or memory verse, list highlights of the day’s activities, or rephrase the memory verse. Faith journal pages go home with children in their Faith Journal.

You may want to provide an extra activity or worksheet for children who finish their journal pages quickly, such as coloring sheets, crossword puzzles, word searches, games. See the Teachers’ Background Notes and rotation.org for ideas.

Closing prayer:
In chapter 24, Joshua speaks to the people and urges them to remain faithful to God in all things. Joshua 24:14-16 reminds us that we, too, must decide whom we will serve. Read this from the Bible to the children. ‘But for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.’

Lord, help us to be faithful to you in all things. Give us the strength and wisdom to trust you, even when the way is difficult or unusual. Help us to be mindful of your leadership, of your presence, of your strength that gives us courage to do what is right. Help us to serve you and do your will in all things. Amen.
Tidy and Dismissal:
· Ask children to help tidy the room. Give any specific instructions for clearing the workshop room.

Additional Suggestions:
You will need to decide how best to adjust the lesson for older and younger students. Keep the children active and involved in activity. Do what works for you and the children. Some ideas in addition to those included in the lesson plan:

Younger Children:
· For classes composed primarily of pre-readers, show the children how to find the passage in the Bible and then have them do it. After everyone has found the passage, have them close their Bibles, set them aside, and listen while you read.
· Spend less time on the laundry basket activity and give them more guidance for creating their dramas.

Resources

Bedford Presbyterian Church. Idea posted at the rotation.org Ideas and Lesson Exchange: “EXODUS to JUDGES: Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Judges, Leviticus, Numbers, Deut.: Joshua, Conquest of Canaan --Lesson Set” (reposted by Neil MacQueen):

Crane, Amy. Lesson posted at the rotation.org Ideas and Lesson Exchange under EXODUS to JUDGES: Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Judges, Leviticus, Numbers, Deut.: “Joshua Creative Dramatics Lesson Plan for Palma Ceia Presbyterian.”
http://rotation.infopop.cc/eve/forums?a=tpc&s=1206067121&f=5856081431&m=997104642&r=997104642#997104642

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.