

Joshua Leads Israel

Lesson 23

Purpose To help the children choose to serve the Lord.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study:
 - Deuteronomy 34:9—Joshua is ordained by Moses to be the prophet and leader of Israel.
 - Joshua 1:1–3, 5–11—The Lord tells Joshua to take possession of the promised land.
 - Joshua 1:16–18—Joshua is commanded to have courage.
 - Joshua 2:1–24—Joshua sends spies to Jericho, where Rahab protects them. They promise to save Rahab and her household.
 - Joshua 3:6–17; 4:13–18—The Israelites cross the Jordan on dry ground.
 - Joshua 6:1–25—The walls of Jericho fall and the city is destroyed; only Rahab and her household are saved.
 - Joshua 24:14–15, 24, 31—Joshua and his people covenant to serve the Lord.
2. Study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account (see “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii). Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will best help the children achieve the purpose of the lesson.
3. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible for each child.
 - b. A Book of Mormon.
 - c. A blindfold.
 - d. Pictures 6-29, Joshua Taking Jericho, and 6-30, Moses Ordaining Joshua.

Suggested

Lesson

Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Tell the children of a group of people who went on a tour of a dimly lit cave. When the people were deep in the heart of the cave, the lights were turned off. The guide told them not to panic; he was just demonstrating total darkness. Before the guide turned the lights back on, he asked the people to point in the direction they would go to leave the cave and keep pointing until they could see again. When the lights were turned back on, everyone was pointing in a different direction. They had lost their way in the dark.

Ask for a volunteer to be blindfolded so you can demonstrate how easy it is to lose our way in the dark (have the child close his or her eyes to block out any light that might get through the blindfold). Ask the children to be very quiet. Turn the blindfolded child around several times, and walk him or her around the room a few steps. Before you remove the blindfold, have the child try to point to his or her chair.

Ask the children if they would like to live in total darkness. Explain that the kind of light you have been talking about during this activity is physical light, but even more important is spiritual light. Have the children read John 8:12 and 1 Nephi 12:17. Explain that if we choose to follow Jesus, we will live in the light, but if we choose to follow Satan, we will be in spiritual darkness. Ask the children to listen to the account of Joshua to see whom he chose to follow.

Scripture Account

Teach the children the account of Joshua leading the children of Israel into the promised land as found in the scriptures listed in the “Preparation” section. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) Use the pictures at appropriate times.

Discussion and Application Questions

Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading and discussing the scriptures with the children in class will help them gain personal insights.

- What did the Lord promise Joshua as Joshua prepared to enter the promised land? (Joshua 1:5.) What was Joshua to do to receive help from the Lord? (Joshua 1:7–8; explain that the book of the law is the scriptures.) What was Joshua told to do with the scriptures? (Joshua 1:8.) How does this counsel apply to us today?
- Before the children of Israel entered the promised land, Joshua was asked to be strong and courageous four times (see Joshua 1:6–7, 9, 18). Why do you think he would need to be strong and have courage at that particular time? Why do we need to be spiritually strong and courageous today?
- How did Rahab help the two spies who were sent by Joshua? (Joshua 2:4–6, 15–16.) What favor did Rahab ask of the spies? (Joshua 2:12–13.) What did Rahab say that showed she believed in the God of Israel? (Joshua 2:11.) Point out to the children that Rahab joined the Israelites after Jericho was destroyed. Both Paul and James wrote about her (see Hebrews 11:31; James 2:24–25).
- What did the Lord do to show the children of Israel that he was with Joshua just as he had been with Moses? (Joshua 3:7–8, 15–17; explain that the ark of the covenant was a portable altar that contained sacred writings, including Moses’ writings and the tablets containing the Ten Commandments.) Why is it important for us to follow the living prophet?
- What did the priests have to do before the waters of the Jordan parted? (Joshua 3:13, 15–17.) How do you think the priests felt walking toward the overflowing river carrying the ark of the covenant? How can we follow the example of the priests in our lives? Help the children understand that sometimes we must obey even when it looks as though we are not being blessed. The blessings come after the test of our faith and obedience.
- How did the Israelites take control of Jericho? (Joshua 6:11–16, 20; see enrichment activity 1.) How do you think the people of Jericho felt as they watched the Israelites march around their city day after day? Emphasize that the walls of the city fell because of the power of the Lord and the faith and obedience of the Israelites. What do you think would have happened if the Israelites had not chosen to do things the Lord’s way?
- What did Joshua do before he asked the people to choose whom they would serve? (Explain that as the prophet he set an example for the children of Israel

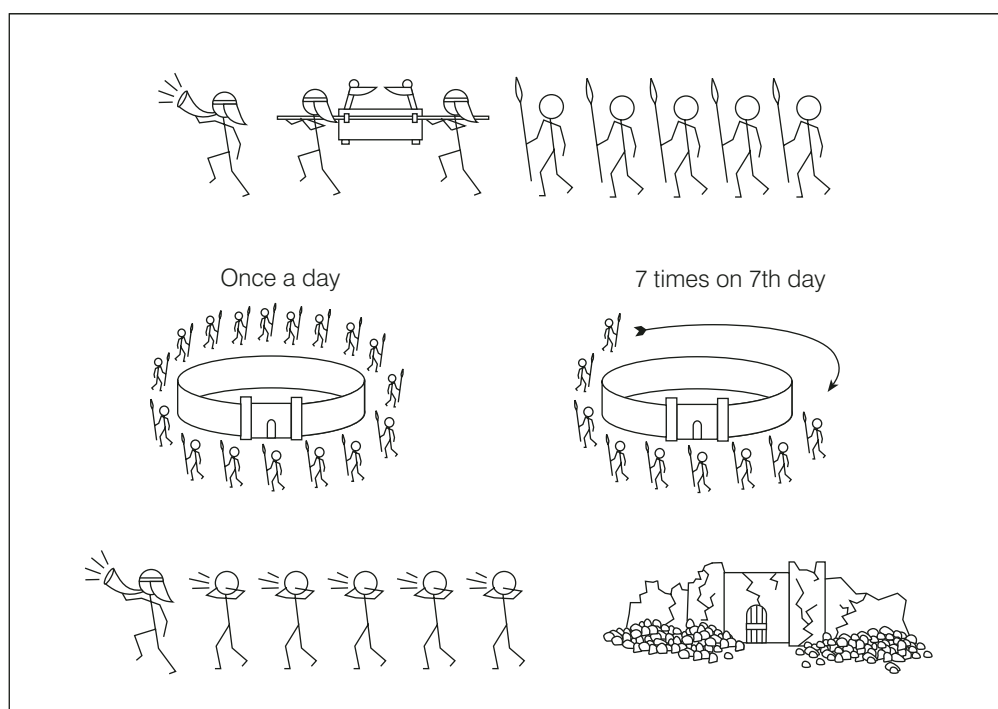
to follow.) When Joshua asked the children of Israel to choose whom they would serve, what was their choice? (Joshua 24:15, 24, 31.) How can we serve the Lord? (By having faith in our Church leaders and following their words.) President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Loyalty to the Lord also includes loyalty to those leaders he has chosen” (“Give the Lord Your Loyalty,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1980, p. 4). Why can’t we serve the Lord and Satan at the same time? (See enrichment activity 2.)

- Why is it important that we make a choice now to follow the Lord? (See enrichment activity 3.)

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Draw simple figures, similar to the following, on the chalkboard to illustrate the events of the Israelites taking the city of Jericho as you tell the story:



2. Without the other children hearing your instructions, ask two children to pantomime movers lifting a very large, heavy object. Have the two children stand three feet (one meter) apart facing each other. They then should pretend to lift the object, try to simultaneously move it toward each other, but be unable to make any progress forward or backward. As the children are pantomiming, tell the class that two movers struggled for several minutes one day trying to move a heavy object through a doorway. Finally, exhausted, the movers gave up. One mover said, “I’ve used all my energy, but I don’t think I’ll ever be able to get this thing inside the door.” “Inside the door?” said the other. “I thought we were trying to move it out the door!”

Explain that it is impossible to go two directions at the same time. We have to choose which direction to go. Ask the children why it is not possible to follow both Jesus and Satan at the same time. (See Matthew 6:24; Alma 5:38–40.)

3. Help the children memorize the following scripture: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).
4. Before class make a copy of the following wordstrips and tape them under the children’s chairs:

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| The Holy Ghost stays with us. |
| The Holy Ghost leaves us. |
| We gain faith. |
| We lose faith. |
| We are more able to resist temptation. |
| We are less able to resist temptation. |
| We gain spiritual blessings. |
| We lose spiritual blessings. |
| We find happiness. |
| We find misery. |

Write the following headings on a chart or chalkboard:

Results of Following Jesus Christ
Results of Following Satan

Have the children find the wordstrips and put them under the correct heading. Explain that if we choose to serve the Lord now, we can avoid much pain and sorrow and we receive greater happiness. A latter-day prophet has told us that Satan loves it when we are discouraged and hesitant to make decisions because it is easier for him to tempt us. The prophet said, “If you have not done so yet, decide to decide!” (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 70; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 46).

5. Discuss and memorize the eleventh article of faith. Point out that Heavenly Father gives us our agency in everything, including the choice of whom we will worship. We know that all of the Lord’s children can worship as they please, but through the scriptures and our prophets, we know that the right choice is to worship God.
6. Sing or read the words to “Can a Little Child like Me?” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 9), “Seek the Lord Early” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 108), or “Choose the Right Way” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 160).

Conclusion

Testimony	You may want to testify that only as we serve the Lord will we find true and eternal happiness. Repeat as a class the following in unison: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).
Suggested Family Sharing	Encourage the children to share with their families a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with their families the "Suggested Home Reading."
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Joshua 3:13–17, 6:1–5, and 24:15 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.