

General Church Education



The Lord's Command to Joshua

Joshua 1

Lesson 3

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

The Lord's Command to Joshua

Joshua 1

Teacher Background

Joshua began to lead children of Israel when he was eighty six. He was first introduced in the Word at age forty-six when he led the fight against Amalek as the Israelites fled from Egypt (Exodus 17). After the victory, Joshua became Moses' assistant. He helped lead and command the children of Israel. He climbed Mount Sinai with Moses to receive the Ten Commandments, was among the twelve men sent to spy out the land of Canaan, and was one of two to bring back a good report suggesting the children of Israel immediately go up and take the land. A year before Moses died, the Lord told him to name Joshua as the next leader. Moses laid his hands on Joshua and gave him the Lord's blessing.

In this chapter Joshua is commissioned as a courageous leader who is to be faithful to the Lord. The Lord then tells Joshua to announce that the children of Israel have three days to prepare to cross the Jordan river and enter the Promised Land. The Jordan formed a boundary to the land of Canaan. Spiritually, crossing this boundary river means moving from knowing the Lord and obeying the truth because it is the right thing to do, to loving the Lord and doing His will from love.

Ideas for Students

- The Lord is with us wherever we go.
- Joshua was a courageous leader.
- True courage is following the Lord both publicly and in private, when nobody is watching.

From the Writings

'Moses' represents Divine Truth, that is, truth which goes forth directly from the Lord. This truth flows into any truth of faith and causes it to be a truth. 'Joshua' represents truth that engages in conflict because he was commanded to fight against Amalek, that is, against falsities arising from interior evil. God's truth itself which goes forth directly does not engage in conflict but is peace itself, since it goes forth from the Divine Goodness of the Lord's Divine Love. To become militant it flows in among angels that have a burning zeal for what is true and good, and when roused by that zeal they go into battle. This is the origin of the truth engaging in conflict that is represented by 'Joshua'. This is why Joshua led the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, and fought the nations there. By the 'nations' in the land of Canaan are meant false ideas and evil loves that must be fought against. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8595.

"The crossing of the Jordan represented the introduction of the sons of Israel, that is, of those who are regenerate, into the kingdom of the Lord; Joshua, who led them in, represented the Lord; and this was done on the third day." *Arcana Coelestia* 901

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Vocabulary

heeded—listened to

omnipotence—having all power

omnipresence—being present everywhere at the same time

boundary—something that indicates *bounds* or limits; a physical feature that marks an agreed-upon line separating two countries

Who Was Joshua?

The book of Joshua tells the story of Joshua, a warrior leader, who led the children of Israel into Canaan to conquer the Promised Land. This is not the first time Joshua appears in the Word. He first led the children of Israel to victory in a battle against the Amalekites soon after they had left Egypt. Here's how that story begins:



“Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.’” Exodus 17:8,9

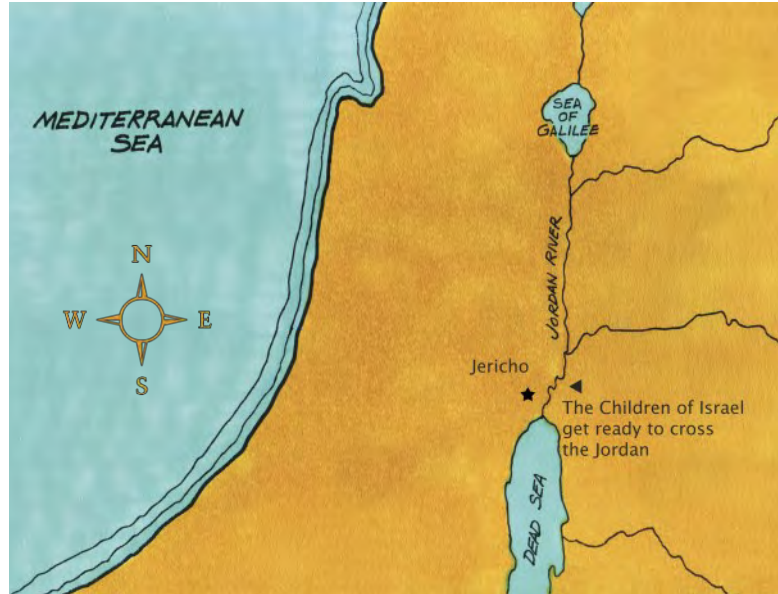
The Lord gave Joshua victory in battle, and Joshua became a hero. He was forty six years old. After the battle Joshua helped Moses to lead and command the children of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness.

Joshua went part way up Mount Sinai with Moses when the Lord gave the Ten Commandments. He was one of twelve men sent to spy out the land of Canaan. The spies discovered wonderful fruits in the land. But they also reported that the people living there were very strong. Only Joshua and Caleb were brave and wanted to go up and take the land at once. Because of this the Lord said they would be the only spies who would be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

A year before Moses died the Lord told him to tell the people that Joshua would be their next leader. Moses laid his hands on Joshua and gave him the Lord's blessing:

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.” Deuteronomy 34:9

Joshua was eighty-six years old when the Lord chose him to lead the children of Israel. He led them for twenty-four years, until he died at 110 years old.



Joshua, the New Leader

Joshua's first big job as the new leader was to lead the children of Israel across the Jordan River and into the land of Canaan. The Lord promised He would be with Joshua, just as He had been with Moses. The Lord is omnipresent—he is with every person all the time. The Lord told Joshua he should:

- be strong and brave
- obey the Ten Commandments
- read and study the law in the books of Moses

Read Joshua 1:1-9.

The Children of Israel Get Ready

There were hundreds of thousands of people in the camp of Israel. Joshua could not speak to all of them himself. He chose officers to walk through the camp and tell people how to get ready to cross the Jordan River. They would leave in three days. Their lives would change completely from then on. Read Joshua 1:10-18.

The people were very busy for three days. They had to prepare food, pack their clothes, prepare their tents to sleep in, and gather together their grazing cattle and flocks. Imagine how excited they were. After looking forward to the Promised Land for forty years they were about to go there!

The River Jordan—a Boundary

The river Jordan was the western boundary or edge of the land of Canaan. It was where the country began, or ended. There were no bridges across the river, so people could not get into the land without wading through the water. There are many kinds of boundaries. For example, a sidewalk is a boundary that shows where you can walk to stay safe from cars. Fences show where one

person's property begins and another's ends. We sometimes talk about giving others "space" by not crossing their personal boundaries. There are boundaries in our minds too. Rules like the Ten Commandments tell us how we should act and how we should not act. The Commandments are the boundaries of heavenly life.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh wanted to live on the east side of the river Jordan, outside the land of Canaan. The Lord said they could do that, but first soldiers from their tribes must help conquer the land of Canaan to the west of the Jordan. They obeyed the Lord and sent soldiers to help with the fighting.

Canaan Is a Picture of Heaven

The New Church teachings tell us that the land of Canaan is a picture of heaven. Just as the children of Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan, opening our minds to true ideas from the Word and having the courage to do them can bring heaven into us. Just as Joshua prepared for battle, we can arm ourselves with true ideas from the Word that have the power to free us from spiritual enemies, like jealousy or lying. And once we know what is right, we can be courageous like Joshua and do it.

Discussion Questions

- How do you feel when you are about to start something new? For example, a new year in school? Or a move to a new house? Why are new things scary? Why might the children of Israel have been scared to go into a new land?
- The children of Israel prepared for three days at the boundary of Canaan before moving forward. They had looked forward to entering the land for many years. What might they have been thinking? How might they have felt?
- Compare waiting for something with actually doing it.
- The Lord promised He would be with Joshua as he entered Canaan. He said, "I will not leave you nor forsake you." (Joshua 1:5) This is because the Lord is *omnipresent*—He is everywhere. He is with us too, everywhere we go. How might knowing this change the way you think about doing something new?
- The Lord promised to be with Joshua as He was with Moses. Moses represents the Word. He received the Ten Commandments. Joshua represents truth that fights in our lives. To begin a heavenly life we need to know true ideas and then use them to fight bad attitudes. What true ideas have given you strength to fight a bad attitude or habit?
- The Lord commanded Joshua to "be of good courage". Have you met someone who is courageous? What are the qualities of a courageous person?
- The Lord has all power. He is *omnipotent*. His power helped Joshua win battles. His power helps us fight bad thoughts and attitudes. We can take courage in knowing that if we try to love others and do what is right His power will help us. Is it possible to do things without the Lord's power? Why or why not?

Activity Overview | The Lord's Command to Joshua

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and of good courage;
Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed,
For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Make a Sword of Truth
- The Lord's Command to Joshua Calligraphy
- Picture to color—Joshua, a Warrior Hero (Joshua 1)

Additional Activity Ideas

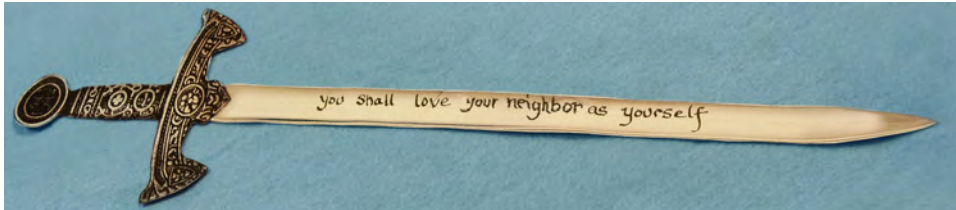
- Write about a time when you would want to have the courage to do the right thing. It can be difficult to stand up for what is right, or to stand up for other people, especially if we know our friends may laugh at us. Perhaps it would be not joining in with friends who are doing something wrong—such as teasing someone, or using bad language, or stealing.

Why would it be difficult to do the right thing?

What do you know from the Word that tells you the right thing to do?

Activity 1 | Make a Sword of Truth

We can use truth from the Lord's Word to fight for what is right, and to protect ourselves against what is wrong.



Materials Needed

- one or more copies of the *Sword of Truth Hilt* and the *Sword of Truth Blade* printed on stiff paper
- tape or glue
- scissors
- a marker, pen or pencil

Directions

1. Cut out a *Sword of Truth Hilt* and a *Sword of Truth Blade* template.
2. Tape or glue the two halves of a sword together to form a single sword.
3. Use a marker, pen or pencil to write one or more true ideas from the Word that help us fight for what is right, or protect ourselves against what is wrong. Some sentences from the Word are provided in the box below. You could also find your own quote from the Word.
4. Display the finished sword(s).

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. Joshua 1:7

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Matthew 22:37

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39

The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Psalm 34:7

Honor your father and your mother. Exodus 20:12

The Sword of Truth Hilt



The Sword of Truth Point



Activity 2 | The Lord's Command to Joshua Calligraphy

The Lord's command to "be strong and of good courage" is a theme throughout Jacob's Ladder 4. Decorate Joshua 1:9. Display to remind you of the Lord's presence during spiritual battles.



