



Lesson Eleven

Believing God's Promises



Growing as a Teacher

Scripture

Numbers 27:12–23
Deuteronomy 3:21–29; 34
Joshua 1, 3–4

Bible Truth

God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites safely into Canaan after Moses died.

Lesson Aim

To know that God always keeps his promises to us and that he will take us safely to the final Promised Land.

Memory Verse

REVIEW:
PSALM 121

Optional:

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

JOSHUA 1:9

After 40 years in the wilderness, Israel was ready to enter the Promised Land. But they would enter without Moses, their godly, faithful leader. The Bible describes Moses as “a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3), but he had fallen to the sin of pride when he usurped God’s authority at Meribah (Numbers 20:1–13). Not allowing him to enter the Promised Land was severe punishment, but it points to the seriousness of any sin in God’s eyes. Though Moses did not enter the earthly Promised Land, God graciously took him to a better land—the heavenly land.

God remained faithful to his promise to Abraham to give the land to his descendants, but his promise required them to take possession of it by driving out the Canaanites. In contrast to the people’s response 40 years earlier, this generation of Israelites believed God and responded in faith and obedience by following Joshua, whom God had chosen to replace Moses.

Joshua carefully followed God’s instructions as the people crossed the Jordan River into Canaan. The priests went first, carrying the ark of the covenant, which reminded the people that God went before them. When the priests’ feet touched the water of the river, which was at flood stage, God piled the waters up in a heap miles away. God had parted the waters of the Red Sea when they began their journey to the Promised Land, and he parted the waters of the Jordan River as they concluded it. The priests stood on dry ground in the center of the river until all the Israelites, numbering in the millions, had crossed over. How astonished people along the banks of the Jordan must have been as they witnessed this dramatic event! God performed miracles at the Red Sea and the Jordan River so that his people would always believe and trust him and so that “all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful” (Joshua 4:24a). Old Testament Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles, testifying of the only true God.

God expected the Israelites to believe his promises, to obey him unquestioningly and to acknowledge their dependence upon him. He expects the same things of us today. Pray that you and your students will grow in your belief and obedience to the expectations of God.

“The hand of the LORD is powerful.”

Lesson Eleven at a Glance

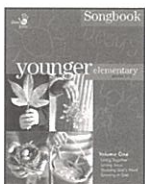
Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
1 Welcome	5–10	Sing “The Wheels of the Cart” to think about how Israelite children felt on their journey.	○ Song poster of “The Wheels of the Cart” (see p. 77 for words)
2 Bible Time	15–20	Listen to ways that God kept his promises to his people and led them into the Promised Land.	○ TA 1a map* ○ TA 11 Jordan River*
3 Memory Verse	5–10	Review Psalm 121 by reciting it as a choral reading.	○ TA 1b Psalm 121** ○ SA 11 Psalm 121 choral reading sheet**
4 Activities	10–15	Complete the activities <i>I Can Be Sure</i> and <i>Find the Words</i> .	○ <i>At Home 11</i> ** ○ Pencils ○ Markers or crayons
5 Final Focus	5	18 Sing “With My Whole Heart” (Songbook , p. 27) and close in prayer.	○ Songbook ○ <i>Optional</i> : song poster, <i>Younger Elementary Vol. 1</i> CD

Total time: 40–60 minutes

* *Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack*
** *Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack*



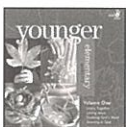
Practical Preparation



Younger Elementary Vol. 1 Songbook

All the songs for this quarter and the entire year are in the Songbook (included in the Fall Teacher's Kit).

18 “With My Whole Heart”
Younger Elementary Vol. 1 CD



Order CD and/or extra Songbooks from Great Commission Publications at 800-695-3387 or www.gcp.org.

Check the supplies list and gather what you need. For the song in **Welcome**, “The Wheels of the Cart,” write the words on poster board or a chalkboard. Write each phrase once; it is not necessary to write the repetitions. Practice it with hand motions so that you can lead it with enthusiasm.

You will also need to make a song poster for “With My Whole Heart,” which you will introduce in **Final Focus** and use the next two Sundays. (The words are also on the back of *At Home 11*.) Try to have musical accompaniment or use the *Younger Elementary Vol. 1* CD.

If you're planning to present the choral reading of **Psalm 121** to the fours and fives or to invited guests the last week of the quarter (see **Memory Verse**, p. 91), make arrangements with the other teacher or decide whom to invite to your classroom. See the **Enrichment** activity (sidebar, p. 79) for a suggestion about invitations.



Welcome

5-10 minutes

Before your students arrive, line up the chairs in two straight lines so that the children will sit as they would on a bus or a train. *After you welcome them to class, say* **When the Israelites were in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, they didn't ride in air-conditioned cars. The men walked, keeping all their cattle, goats and donkeys together, and they led donkeys that pulled the carts filled with their belongings. The women and children walked or they rode in carts or on donkeys. Let's pretend we're Israelite children riding in a bumpy cart in the desert and we're almost to the Promised Land.** Display the song poster you have made and explain that you will sing a song to the familiar tune, *The Wheels on the Bus*.

The Wheels of the Cart

The wheels of the cart go 'round and 'round,
'round and 'round, 'round and 'round.

The wheels of the cart go 'round and 'round,
All through the day.

The children in the cart lean back and forth, . . .
All through the day.

The tails on the donkeys go swish, swish,
swish, . . .
All through the day.

The humps on the camels go up and down, . . .
All through the day.

At last we shout, "We see the land," . . .
"Praise God the Lord!"

Hand Motions

- Hold your hands in front of you and move them around each other in a circular motion.
- Lean back and forth.
- Swish one hand from side to side.
- Stretch up and lift slightly in your chair, then go back down.
- Point into the distance.

Early Arrivals



Ask children who arrive early to help you line up the chairs for the **Welcome** activity. Then give them crayons or colored markers to illustrate the song poster for "The Wheels of the Cart."

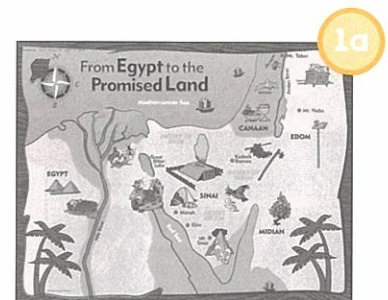


Bible Time

15-20 minutes

After you help the children put their chairs into place for the lesson, open your Bible to Numbers 27. *Display TA 1a map.* **At last the Israelites were there! They could look across the Jordan River and see the land that God had promised to them so long ago. Point to it on the map.** Its mountains towered over the green valleys. It had plenty of water and rich soil for growing vegetables and fruits. But best of all, after years of wandering in the desert, this would be their home.

Ask Have you ever gone on a long trip? Maybe you went somewhere really fun, but when it was time to go home, the trip back took such a long time. You were so glad when you finally got home—to your own room, your dog, your friends and your toys. *Ask*





Moses Was Unique

God continued to speak to his Old Testament people through a number of prophets, but there would not be another prophet like Moses—one with whom God spoke face to face—until the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus was a prophet like Moses (Acts 7:37), but he was greater than Moses. “Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house. . . . But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house” (Hebrews 3:5–6a).



Who Was Joshua?

Joshua was one of the two spies who had encouraged the people 40 years earlier to trust God and enter the Promised Land. As a man of faith who had also been the leader of Israel’s army (Exodus 17:10), he was well-equipped to lead the Israelites in taking possession of Canaan.



Have you ever felt that way? *Wait for responses.* If you’ve ever been glad to come home after a long trip, you know a little about how the Israelites felt. They were finally home.

But as they camped by the river, waiting to cross it and go into the Promised Land, Moses gave them some sad news. He said, “I am not going to enter the land with you. God has told me it is time for me to die.” That was hard for the people to hear. They must have wondered what they would do without Moses to lead them. But Moses said, “God has chosen Joshua as your new leader. He will lead you into the Promised Land.” Moses and Joshua stood together at the door to the tabernacle, and God’s pillar of cloud came and stood over them. The people knew that God had chosen Joshua. Moses said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid, for you will bring the people into the land God has promised to give them. The LORD himself has promised to be with you.” Then God told Moses to go up on top of a mountain. From there, God showed him the land of Canaan, and then Moses died. God himself buried Moses’ body. The Israelites were sad and they grieved for Moses for 30 days.

Then God said it was time to move on. Joshua told them to roll up their tents and get ready to march to the Promised Land. They did just as Joshua said. How different the people’s response had been 40 years earlier! Then they were afraid and refused to go into Canaan because they didn’t believe God’s promises. But this generation of Israelites believed God enough to obey him.

Joshua told them God’s instructions: “When you see the priests carrying the ark of the covenant, follow them.” The ark of the covenant was a chest made of wood covered with gold. It was kept in the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies. The ark had large rings on the sides. *Ask* Does anyone remember why it had rings? *(No one could touch the ark. It was carried by poles that were put through the rings.) Ask* Do you remember what the ark of the covenant showed? *(God living among his people)* When the people saw the priests walking toward the Jordan River with the ark of the covenant, they remembered that God was leading them.

God told Joshua that when the priests reached the Jordan River, they were to step into the water. That’s just what they did. As soon as their feet touched the edge of the water, the water stopped flowing. God piled the water up in a heap so that the river in front of them was completely dry! Then the priests walked into the middle of the river and stood there on dry ground while all the Israelites crossed over into Canaan. *Display TA 11 Jordan River.*

Ask Do you remember another time when God pushed the water back and made a dry path for his people to walk on? Where was that? *(the Red Sea)* That was when the Israelites were just starting on their journey to the Promised Land. Now, 40 years later, as they were about to enter the Promised Land, God pushed the water back again. Where did he make a dry path for them to walk across this time? *(the Jordan River)*

When everyone had crossed the dry river, Joshua told 12 men

to choose large stones from the middle of the river and take them to their camp. Joshua gathered 12 more stones and piled them up to mark the place in the middle of the dry river where the priests were standing. Then he called to the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” As soon as the priests stepped up out of the river with the ark of the covenant, the waters roared down through the river and began to flow again. But God’s people were safe in Canaan!

When they came to their camping place, Joshua used the 12 stones the men had taken from the river to build a monument to remind the people of all God had done for them. Joshua said, “When your children ask you, ‘Why are these stones here?’ tell them about the wonderful day when the Lord dried up the Jordan River so that we could cross over into the Promised Land.” Joshua explained that God had made paths through the Red Sea and the Jordan River so that his people would always trust God and so that other people would be able to see how powerful he was.

As the Israelites ate fruit from the trees and made fresh bread from the grain that grew in the fields, they remembered all that God had done for them. No longer would they gather manna to eat, for the land would produce all the food they needed. Their flocks would roam on Canaan’s grassy hillsides and drink good water from its streams. God had kept all his promises. He had brought his people safely to their new land.

Do you think there could ever be a happier time for God’s people? God promises that there will be! The happiest day of all for God’s people will be when they are with him in the new heaven and new earth, the final Promised Land. Canaan was wonderful, but heaven is even better! Sin would still be a problem in Canaan, but in the new earth, all God’s people will have pure hearts. There will be no more sin, no sadness, no fear. Best of all, in that final Promised Land, God’s people will be with him forever and ever.

Ask Who are God’s people? (*all who trust Jesus as their Savior*) If you trust in Jesus, you can be sure God will keep his promise to you to take you to be with him.



Memory Verse

5–10 minutes

Hand out a [SA 11 Psalm 121 choral reading sheet](#) to each child. Then review Psalm 121 by reciting it all together. Next, divide the class into two groups to recite the psalm as a choral reading. Be sure to mix older and younger, boys and girls in each group. Before you begin, ask for three volunteers for the individual readings. If you’re planning to present the choral reading to guests or another class (see [Memory Verse](#), p. 91), practice it several times today and assign the individual parts.



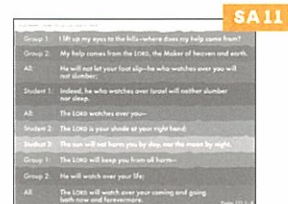
Jordan River

The Jordan River formed a natural border for the Promised Land. The only large river in Canaan, it was the site of Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist hundreds of years later.



Enrichment

If your students will present the choral reading of Psalm 121 to invited guests the last Sunday of the quarter (see [Memory Verse](#), p. 91), have the children draw the covers for invitations. Print the information (title, date, time and place) on a half-sheet of paper and make copies. Show the children how to fold them in half to make invitations, and provide colored markers or crayons for them to decorate the front.



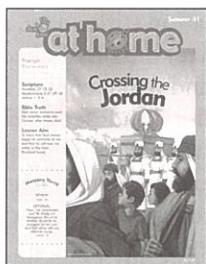
Optional Memory Work

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”
JOSHUA 1:9



Teaching Tip

If you plan to present the Psalm 121 choral reading later (see **Memory Verse**, p. 91) be sure students do NOT take home the choral sheet hand-out. Make a list of which students were assigned to each part while the information is fresh in your mind.



18 “With My Whole Heart”
Songbook, p. 27



Items to Send Home

○ *At Home 11*

Group 1: I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from?

Group 2: My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

All: He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber;

Student 1: Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

All: The LORD watches over you—

Student 2: The LORD is your shade at your right hand;

Student 3: The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

Group 1: The LORD will keep you from all harm—

Group 2: He will watch over your life;

All: The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.



Activities

10–15 minutes

Give each child a copy of *At Home 11*, pencils and crayons or markers. Read the title and directions for the part(s) you choose to do.

In *I Can Be Sure*, after the children have crossed out the letters, have them write the words on the lines. To make it easier to read, encourage them to change the capital letters to lowercase. **Answer: God always keeps his promises.**

In *Find the Words*, it may help some students to have a card or piece of paper to help their eyes focus on one line of letters at a time as they look for the words.



Final Focus

5 minutes

If you made a song poster (see p. 10), use it to teach the children the first verse of “With My Whole Heart.” (The words are also on the back of *At Home 11*.) Explain that loving and hearing God means that we will trust him and obey his Word.

As you close in prayer, thank God for always keeping his promises to us. Be sure each child has a copy of *At Home 11* to take home.