



Weaving God's Promises

LESSON 8

Into the Promised Land

This story is long but best told all at one time. If necessary, however, it may be divided into two lessons.

Summary of Today's Story

After the death of Moses at the edge of the Promised Land, Joshua becomes the new leader of the Israelites. They cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land and proceed to occupy the land. As their leader, Joshua sends spies to see how difficult this will be.

Rahab, a harlot living in the wall-fortified city of Jericho, aids the spies by hiding them and misdirecting those who are pursuing them. In the coming Battle of Jericho, Rahab is spared as the walls of the city come falling down.

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version* Bible.

Joshua 1-6, especially:

Joshua 2 (Rahab and the spies)

Joshua 6 (the Battle of Jericho)

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today's story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church on the following Sunday:

Year C: Fourth Sunday in Lent



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

Finally, the Israelites cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land—Canaan, “a land flowing with milk and honey,” the land promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Compared with the wilderness, it is indeed a paradise, full of grapes and other fruit along with lots of good land for harvesting food. But it is also already occupied—by the Canaanites and other tribes. The land of Canaan is not an empty land, free for the taking. The Israelites must take it by force and drive the other peoples out.

So begins the long dispute about who really owns this piece of land, a dispute which still goes on today. It is in today’s Bible passage that it says that God has given this land to the Israelites. The other people worship other gods, gods whose names you sometimes read or hear about in other Bible readings: Baal, Molech (the god of a religion that practiced child sacrifice) and others.

Joshua is Moses’ successor. Moses had angrily lashed out at God once in the wilderness and so would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. When the people get to the Jordan River, the edge of the Promised Land, Moses is shown the land on the other side, then he dies.

Joshua takes over and proves to be a loyal and worthy successor to Moses, faithful to the Lord and following God’s commandments. Notice how, in the story of the Battle of Jericho, Joshua obeys God’s strange commands for taking over and destroying the city. Would we obey—or scoff?

Note: If you are disturbed by the story of the mass destruction of peoples in the book of Joshua, here is another way to look at the actual circumstances of the conquest of Canaan. The Hebrews who settled

in Canaan were a free association of serfs fleeing from the stifling environment of the Canaanite city-states. United in rejecting the ancient system of human overlords, they insisted that no one was inherently better than any other—thus starting a democracy under God alone. Far from building their nation on the extermination of those outside their group, they welcomed into their confederation any people who shared their longing for a new society. Thus their society was inclusive, not exclusive (from *The Interpreter’s Commentary on the Bible*).

The Episcopal Thread



Since their release from Egyptian slavery, God’s people have longed for the Promised Land, a land of abundance and plenty, where there is no more want or hunger and no

more wandering in the vast wilderness of fear and uncertainty. They will be a people with an identity, God’s chosen people. In Deuteronomy, God says, “It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you... It was because the Lord loved you” (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

In the Thanksgiving over the Water in the rite of Holy Baptism (*BCP*, p. 306), we give thanks to God for the gift of water and remember that God led the people through water out of bondage into “the land of promise.”

In these stories, the Israelites take the land by force. In today’s time, the Episcopal Church would not look so kindly at such free use of war. General Convention has repeatedly approved resolutions that state “war...is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ.” There are no prayers in the *Prayer Book* that extol war, although thanksgiving and prayers are offered for those people who have chosen to fight for their country and its liberties, for example, the Prayer for Heroic Service on p. 839.

Episcopalians can relate more to Joshua's wars which lead toward prayers for peace. In the *Prayer Book*, the Prayers for the World (pp. 814-816) are prayers for peace and for justice, without which there is no peace.

Episcopalians can also relate to Joshua's openness to God's strange methods of guidance. Episcopalian ethos teaches that Christians do not know all the answers to tough theological questions, nor do they always have the right insights into God's plan for them. So Episcopalians tend to focus not so much on getting the right answers but on prayerfully discerning what path to take, accepting that many situations are ambiguous and unclear, and offering (and receiving) forgiveness when wrong. Thus after a person is baptized, the officiant prays that God give him or her "an inquiring and discerning heart" (*BCP*, p. 308) that is open to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

Weaving God's Beloved Community

God's Beloved Community has no place for war or conquest of other people. In a world where war happens, we can pray and work for peace. And we can promote the values of listening empathetically, working together, being open to compromises, and addressing inequity. We can also promote the values of respecting the dignity of every human being, as we promise in our Baptismal Covenant. These are ways of promoting peace by building the foundation for mutual respect with one another.

Topics that can be discussed with children:

People sometimes get into arguments when they don't agree on something. What is a good way to talk about something you disagree about while keeping your hands and feet to yourself?

What ideas have you heard from your parents or teachers about what to do when you and somebody don't get along?



Gathering

As the children enter the classroom, give them a simple activity that relates to today's lesson. On page 11, you'll find a Gathering Activity handout to use if you wish. Below are other suggestions.

For the younger children, you might have them make Trumpets of Jericho, which they can "blow" during the storytelling time. You'll find directions on page 15 in the Activity section at the end of this lesson.

For older children, you might provide word games or puzzles. (You'll find an online resource for creating puzzles on page 2 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.) Or you might simply let the children enjoy a brief time of fellowship when they can visit with each other, share the week's news and build community and friendships.

After all the children have arrived and settled down, gather them together and say an opening prayer. You may use any prayer or collect from the *Prayer Book* or make one up yourself. You will find suggestions for making up your own prayers on page 12 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.



Telling the Story

Read aloud today's story from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, tell the story in your own words, or read from the version of the story we provide, found on pages 8-10.

The story of the taking of Jericho is an exciting story. Children enjoy hearing about Rahab, the Jericho woman who helped the Israelite spies, and how her life was then spared. They will also enjoy the way that the Israelites, circling the city, blowing horns and yelling, sent the walls of Jericho tumbling down. If the younger children made trumpets during Gathering time, invite them to “blow” their trumpets at the appropriate time in the story.

For an interesting storytelling idea, see Potato Storytelling on page 23 in the activity section at the end of this lesson.

This is an excellent story for dramatization. Invite the children to act out the story, particularly the last part. On page 6 in the Appendix you'll find suggestions of ways to dramatize the story along with additional ideas for engaging the children in the story.

Today's story is an important part of this year's story, the story of our salvation. It deserves a good slow telling. Even after we sinned and rebelled against God in the wilderness, God still gives us the Promised Land and still makes us God's people.

Let the children hear the story without analyzing it for them or asking them to explore its meaning. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it.



Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

Materials

- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional:* flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Read one or two verses from today's scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

For younger children: Joshua 1:1-2 or 1:1-3

For older children: Joshua 1:1-9; Joshua 6:1-7

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of Joshua:
(*Read the selected passage.*)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Ask for prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done for us during the past week. Remind the children that it is good to begin prayers to God by acknowledging and praising God for God's goodness to us, in small and big ways.
- Encourage prayers of concern for others. At this time, ask children to remember the homeless and the hungry in our community, the victims of war or violence and those who are ill.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special occasions.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



Sharing

Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as:

- For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful, in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Encourage children to bring their own grace to class, learned at home or at church camp, and have them lead the class in saying their grace.

This is a good time, while sharing a snack, to begin discussing the story that the children just heard. You do not need to analyze the story, but the children may have questions, especially about the fate of the people of Jericho and the picture of God in this story. Remember that God cried when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. No doubt God also cried at the Battle of Jericho.

Older children, especially, may wonder how the spies got into Jericho, why their speech failed to betray them, how the king found out about them. All will delight in the story details, like the bumbling Jericho police rushing off in the wrong direction, the escape of the spies down the wall and the battle plan of the people in bringing the walls down.

The *VeggieTales* half-hour video about Joshua, *Josh and the Big Wall* (Franklin, TN : Big Idea, 2009), though a silly movie, is actually a good account of the fall of Jericho and how Joshua needed to trust in the Lord rather than in his own plans.



Memorization

Encourage any intermediate children who have not yet memorized the books of the Bible and the Ten Commandments to finish this exercise. Suggestions for ways to help the children with their memorization can be found on page 15 in the Appendix, also found on the Website.

For “extra credit” in memorization, you may assign the Nicene Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and the Prayer of Thanksgiving that we say after communion. We will also encourage children to learn these at a later time.



Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God’s love and blessing.

The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

- Lord God, you told the Israelites that you are with them wherever they go. We know that you will be with us, too, wherever we go. Keep us ever mindful of your love and your presence so that we may see your works in every part of our lives and give you praise for ever and ever. We ask this in Jesus’ name. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God!



Weaving Our Faith

Before the closing prayer, help the children weave the strands of the lesson together by asking questions such as:

- What was today’s story about?
- What did God do in this story to help the people?
- What did we learn in this lesson?

Encourage the children to remember key words or phrases from today’s story, such as:

- *Promised Land*
- *obey God*



Weaving God's Promises

JOSHUA 1-6, especially 2 and 6

Spies check out Jericho and meet Rahab

After 40 whole years in the wilderness, the Israelites come to a hill that stands just at the border of the land where God wants them to live. The Jordan River is down below. There, God shows Moses that whole land, all the way to the horizon as far as he could see. And then Moses dies. Joshua takes his place as leader of the people.

The people camp on one side of the Jordan River. On the other side is their land. They will camp here for three days while they get ready to move in.

The other side of the Jordan River is not an empty land. There are people living there. And right now, there is even a city, Jericho. The Israelites must destroy Jericho before they can move in.

So Joshua sends two men to spy on Jericho and to look at all the land that is beyond the Jordan River. What must the Israelites do to take the land away? What is on that land, that they need to know?

The two men sneak into Jericho and knock on the door of a house that sits on the outer wall of the city. Rahab opens the door and sees the men standing there. She knows right away that they are not from Jericho. They wear different clothes and speak a different language. She lets them in anyway and gives them beds to sleep in for the night.

The king of Jericho has his spies, too. They tell him that some men coming from that great army of people have come into the city. They also tell him that these men went to Rahab's house.

Rahab hears the king's soldiers coming, and she takes the two Israelite spies up to the roof of her house. She hides them in the straw that is lying on the roof.

The king sends word to Rahab, saying, “Some men came to you today. I order you to bring them out to me. They are our enemies.”

Rahab says, “Two men did come here. But I didn’t know where they came from! When they heard that we close the city gates at dark, they left. I think they went out of the gate and out of the city walls.”

So the soldiers hurry out of the city gates. It gets dark, and the gates shut behind them.

But the two spies are still hiding on Rahab’s roof. Rahab goes up to them in the dark. She tells them, “I know all about you and your God. We heard how God dried up the water of the Red Sea when you came out of Egypt. Your God is God in heaven and on earth! Everybody is afraid of you, because we know that you will take the land and the city, and we know that you can do it.”

Then she said, “So I ask you, since I helped you out, please help my family and me. When you destroy the city, please save me, my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all our families.”

The men say to her, “We will! If you keep us a secret, we will keep you safe!”

Then, because it is not safe for them to be in Jericho, Rahab takes a red rope and ties it one end to her house. She lets the other end hang out of her window, all the way to the ground below. The window is on the city wall. The men will go out this window and escape.

Before they leave, the men say, “Tie this rope in your window when we come back to invade the city. This will be our sign that you are here and that we will protect this house. Bring your whole family to this place and stay here. When the city comes down, your house will stay standing and everybody in it will be safe.”

Then the men slide down the rope. Now they are outside Jericho. They hurry back to tell Joshua what Rahab told them.

Time for Jericho to fall down

Three days later, it is time. One night, Joshua sees a man holding a sword. Joshua says to him, “Who are you?” The man says, “I am the commander of

God’s army. Here I am to help you.” And so Joshua knows that God will be with him at Jericho.

The king and the people of Jericho have heard all about the Israelites, just as Rahab had heard, just like Rahab said. So everybody shuts themselves up inside. No one comes out and no one goes in.

God tells Joshua what to do. There are strange instructions, but Joshua knows to obey God. This is what God says:

“Seven priests with seven trumpets must march around the city one time every day for six days. With them, I want all of your warriors to march in front and behind the priests. On the seventh day, they are to march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing their trumpets the whole time. And keep the people quiet.

“Then after seven times around, the priests are to make a long blast with their horns. When you hear this, all the people will shout with a loud shout. Then the walls of the city will fall down flat, and you can go in.”

So the Israelites do what God tells them. On the seventh day of marching and blowing trumpets, Joshua tells the people to shout as loud as they can. The city walls hear the shouting and fall down. Then the Israelites charge into the city and city is theirs.

Sadly, all of the people of Jericho are killed when the Israelites take the city. But Rahab and all her family did as the spies told her to do. When the Israelites go into Jericho, they find the only house still standing—a house with a red rope hanging from the window. They go inside and lead Rahab and her family out of Jericho. Then Rahab and her family join the Israelites and become part of their community.

This is just the beginning of the battles that God’s people the Israelites fight, so they can live in the land that they call their Promised Land. They fight many battles until finally, after many years and many battles, they can settle down in the land—the land that God promised as “a land of milk and honey.”



Weaving God's Promises

GATHERING ACTIVITY YOUR PROMISED LAND

The Israelites were told that they will enter the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. This was to be a paradise on earth where they would live. If you could imagine a Promised Land, what would it look like? Draw a picture below of what would be in *your* Promised Land.



Weaving God's Promises

SPIES IN JERICHO for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

When the Israelites got to the Promised Land, Joshua sent spies to see how fortified the city of Jericho was, in preparation for conquering it. The spies had to watch out for the men whom the king of Jericho had sent to capture them.

Children play the *spies* and the *king's hunters* in this modified game of Tag. The game is best played outside, but if not feasible, use the largest room possible.

Directions:

Invite the children to play the Spies in Jericho game:

1. Divide the room into three areas, the *wilderness*, *Jericho* and the *neutral zone*. The *neutral zone* should be larger than the other two areas. These areas should be side by side.
2. Place an object, like a Nerf® ball, at the edge of *Jericho*. This is a sack of grapes that the Israelites, after years in the desert, really want.
3. Divide the children into two teams, the *spies* and the *king's hunters*. The *spies* stand in the *wilderness*, while the *king's hunters* stand in *Jericho*, with their backs to the spies.
4. When you say “Go,” the *spies* sneak up to *Jericho* and try to capture the sack of grapes without being tagged. The *king's hunters*, though, must wait until you yell “The hunters are coming!” before they can turn around and try to tag the *spies*.
5. If a *spy* gets tagged, the *spy* becomes one of the *king's hunters*. The *spies* need to get all the way back to the *wilderness* without being tagged.
6. If one of the *spies* captures the sack of grapes and holds it up, *Jericho* has been conquered and the game starts over.



Weaving God's Promises

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER for Elementary, Intermediate

Children form—and pass through—a fun human obstacle course!

Directions:

Invite the children to play the Crossing the Jordan River game:

1. Explain:

- As you remember, the people of Israel had a lot of problems wandering through the wilderness before they got to the Promised Land. And when they got to that Promised Land, they still had to cross the Jordan River. God did not make their journey easy. God wanted them to learn how to trust and worship God and to rely on God alone. The people had many obstacles to overcome before they were ready to enter the Promised Land.
- You will pretend to be the people of Israel, trying to cross the Jordan River in order to enter the Promised Land. But it's not easy to cross a river—there are floating logs, rocks, trees in the way, all that water, lots of river animals, crocodiles. In this game, you will form both a human obstacle course and a bridge to cross the river.

2. Players may hold their arms to form hoops or bend over and put their hands on the floor to make tunnels, or form whatever positions they want.
3. The first player forms a position. The second player crawls under, climbs over or goes through the first player and forms another position. The third player goes over, under or through the first two players, and so on.
4. When the last player has gone through the human obstacle course and forms a position, the first player goes through the course. When everyone has done the whole course at least once the game is over.



Weaving God's Promises

THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY for Preschool, primary

Children make a simple snack to enjoy with milk.

Materials:

- bread
- honey, preferably in jars that can be squeezed
- cookie cutters of various shapes
- plastic knives, 1 per child
- milk and cups

Directions:

Invite each child to cut a shape from the bread, then spread the bread with honey. Serve with milk and enjoy!



Weaving God's Promises

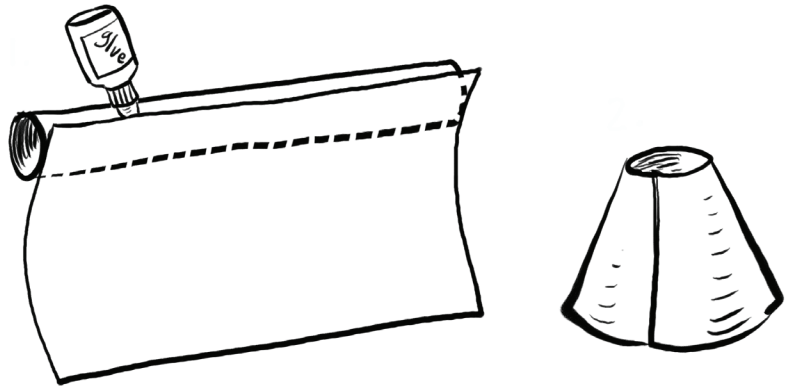
TRUMPETS OF JERICHO for Preschool, Primary

Children make paper trumpets, reminding them of the unusual way that the walls of Jericho were brought down.

If you have the children make these trumpets during Gathering time, they can “blow” them during the storytelling time.

Materials:

paper towel tubes, 1 per child
yellow construction paper
glue or tape
colored markers
black markers
Bell Pattern (p. 16)
scissors



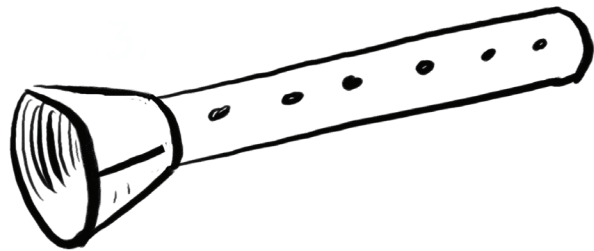
Preparation:

Trace the *Bell Pattern* onto yellow construction paper and cut out. Make one bell shape for each child.

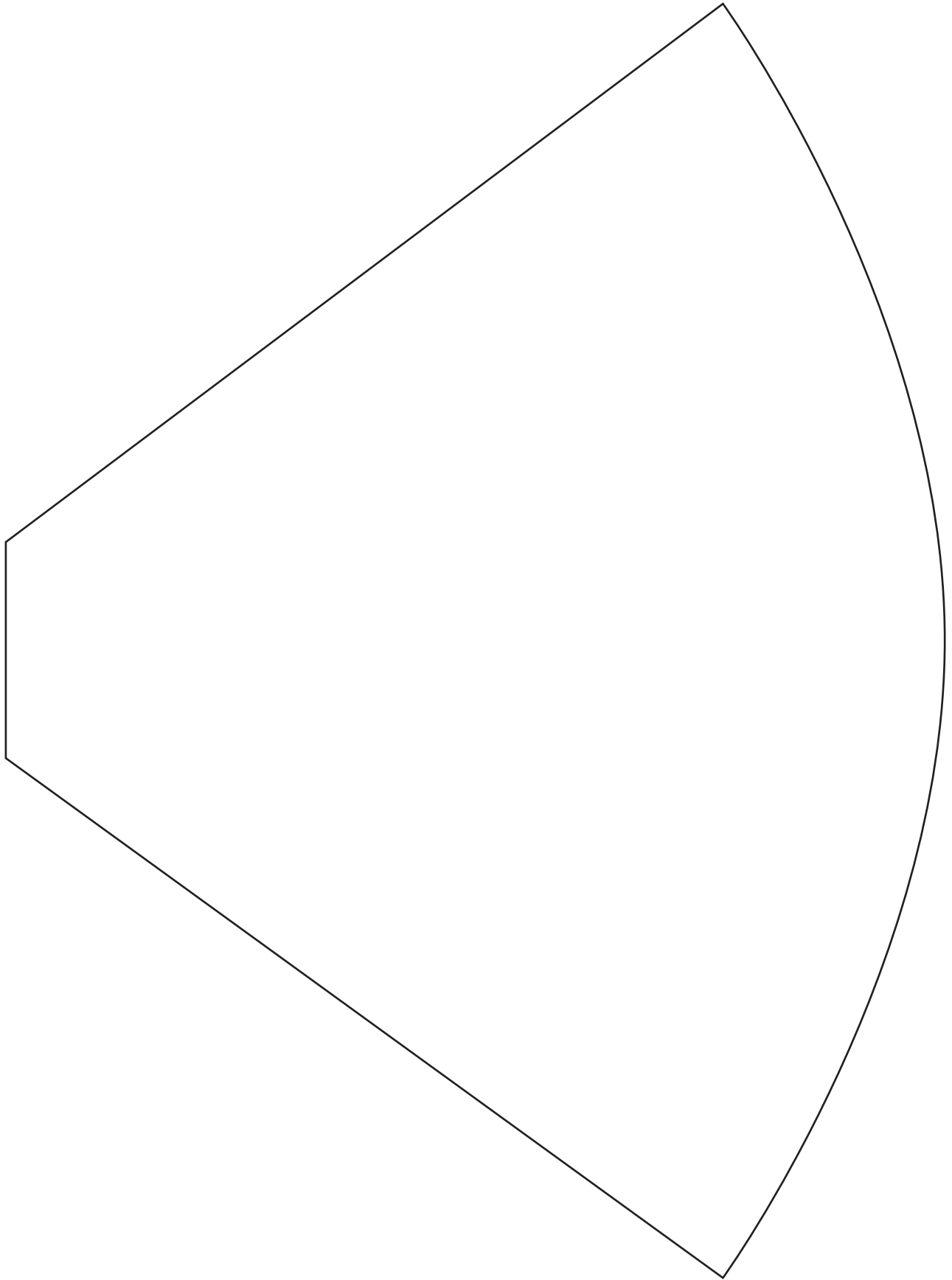
Directions:

Distribute the bell shapes and invite each child to make a trumpet. Help the younger children as needed. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut a sheet of yellow construction paper to fit around a paper towel tube. Wrap the paper around the tube and glue or tape to secure.
2. Roll the bell pattern into a bell shape and glue it onto the end of a tube. Tape will help hold the bell in place.
3. With a black marker, draw finger holes on the trumpet. Use the colored markers to decorate the bell, if you want.



BELL PATTERN





Weaving God's Promises

FEET FOR GOD for Primary

Children make a class poster with their footprints.

Materials:

colorful construction paper
scissors
markers, other decorative elements if desired
glue
fabric, felt or large construction paper

Directions:

Invite the children to make a Feet for God poster:

1. Ask every child to take off one shoe and sock, stand on a piece of construction paper and trace around the bare foot.
2. Have the children cut out their footprints and write *I follow God* on them, then decorate their footprints with markers and other decorations.
3. Invite all the children to glue their footprints onto a large sheet of fabric, felt or construction paper.
4. Tape the poster on the wall.



Weaving God's Promises

WE WILL SERVE THE LORD FLAGS for Preschool

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). This was Joshua’s response when the people had at last gained the land that God had promised them. Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together to ask whether they would serve the Lord, or whether they would worship other gods, the gods of the local people.

“If you are unwilling to serve,” said Joshua, “you must choose now. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” The people agreed, and together they all renewed the covenant with God.

Children make flags as a reminder that we too will serve the Lord.

Materials:

- felt material
- scissors
- fabric pens
- balloon sticks or dowels
- tacky glue
- duct tape
- fabric paints
- paintbrushes

Preparation:

Cut the felt into a flag or pennant shape, one piece for each child. On each piece, use the fabric pens to write *We will serve the Lord*. (Do this far enough in advance that the paint will have time to dry.)



Directions:

Hand out the pieces of felt and invite each child to make a flag:

1. Help the children glue their flags to balloon sticks or dowels. Use duct tape to make sure that the sticks holds securely.
2. Invite the children to use fabric paints to decorate their flags.



Weaving God's Promises

PROMISED LAND STRATEGY PLAN for Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

God gave Joshua a creative way of taking Jericho.

In this puzzle, children are challenged to think creatively and to consider how God sometimes gives us ways to make things work that we would not think of ourselves.

Materials:

- 6 clear plastic cups for every 2-4 children
- pitcher of water
- permanent marker

Preparation:

Draw a line around each cup, about one inch from the bottom.

Directions:

Invite the children to solve this puzzle:

1. Divide children into teams of 2-4 depending on the size of your class. If possible, have at least 2 teams, but in a small class you can all work together.
2. Give each group 6 cups. Fill three cups with water up to the line. Put the cups in a line, in this order: 2 empty, 3 full, 1 empty cup.
3. Challenge the children to change the order of the cups to: full-empty-full-empty-full-empty. To do this, *they can move only one cup.*
4. When they have worked on this for a few minutes, give the children the answer to this puzzle or let one of the teams explain it. (*The solution is to pour the water from the 4th cup, which is full, into the 1st cup, which is empty; then put the 4th cup back where it was before.*)

Explain that we might have thought only about moving the *cups*, rather than moving the *water*. In Joshua's story with Jericho, most commanders would have thought about fighting the *army* rather than tackling the *wall*. But Joshua trusted in God, who gave him the unusual means of taking the city. God also gives us the brains—and a relationship with God through prayer—to help us think of creative ways to solve problems. Ask:

- When somebody teases us, we might want to hit the teaser, but what would God want us to do?



Weaving God's Promises

ALL AROUND JERICO for Preschool

Children sing “March around Jericho” to the tune of “Ring around the Rosy” and all fall down at the end, knocking down *Jericho*.

Materials:

optional: building blocks

Directions:

Invite the children to play the All Around Jericho song-game:

1. Teach the children the “March Around Jericho” song, so they can easily sing it as they play.
2. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Put building blocks in the center of the circle, or have three or more children be *Jericho* and stand together in the center.
3. Have the children sing “March Around Jericho” as they march in a circle around *Jericho*.
4. When they come to “All fall down!” at the word *down* the children move to the center and knock the blocks down or wave their arms and the children who are *Jericho* fall down.
5. Have the children trade places so that other children can be *Jericho*, or set up the blocks and play again.

Song: March around Jericho

(to the tune of “Ring around the Rosy”)

March around Jericho,
March around Jericho,
Sound the trumpets,
All fall down!



Weaving God's Promises

SPY GLASSES FOR JOSHUA'S PEOPLE for Preschool

Children make simple spy glasses out of paper towel tubes.

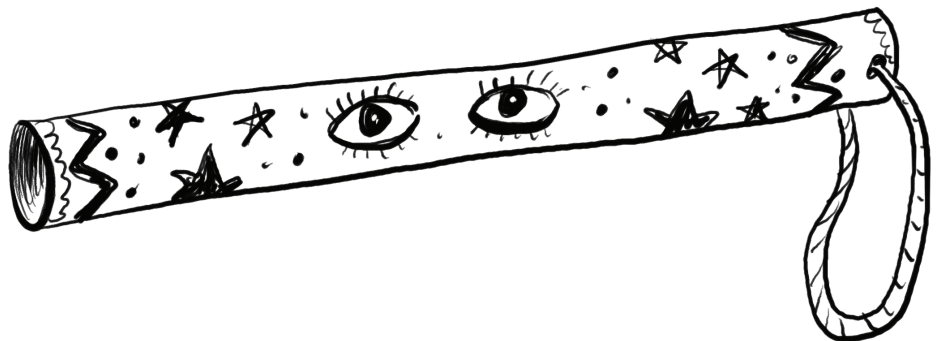
Materials:

paper towel or wrapping paper tube, 1 per child
hole punch
yarn or thin ribbon
construction paper
markers
transparent tape
glue
scissors

Directions:

Invite each child to make a spy glass:

1. Cut construction paper to the length of the tube. Help the children wrap it around the tube, cut it to size and glue. You may need to tape it to make it secure.
2. Invite the children to decorate their tubes with markers.
3. Punch a hole at one end of each child's tube and thread a length of yarn or ribbon through it and tie.





Weaving God's Promises

GAMES FOR REMEMBERING ISRAEL'S FAMILY NAMES for Elementary, Intermediate

Children play this game as a way to remember the names of some of the Israel's families, which were called tribes. You need a fairly large open space for this game.

Materials:

masking tape or rope

Directions:

Invite the children to play:

1. Use the masking tape to make a goal line at each end of the room. If playing outside, use rope.
2. Divide the class into two equal teams. Name each team one of the tribes of Israel:
Judah Zebulun
Simeon Naphtali
Ephraim Asher
Benjamin Joseph
Dan Gad
Issachar Reuben
3. Each tribe stands behind their goal line. The first tribe stands with their backs turned.
4. At your signal, the second tribe slowly sneaks up on the first tribe. When they are near enough, call out, "The *(name of the tribe)* are coming!"
5. The first tribe turns around and chases the second tribe back to their goal line. If the first tribe tags anyone, they get a point.
6. Then the second tribe turns their backs while the first tribe sneaks up on them. When you call out, "The *(name of the tribe)* are coming!" the second tribe turns around and chases the first tribe back to their goal line.
7. The tribe having the most points at the end wins. You may "shuffle" the tribes and rename them at the end of each game.



Weaving God's Promises

POTATO STORYTELLING for Primary

Children make potato characters and act out the story of Joshua.

Materials:

potatoes, odd shapes if possible, 1 per child
push pins

Directions:

Invite the children to make potato characters:

1. Instruct the children to stick push pins into potatoes to make eyes.
2. As you tell the story of Joshua, have the children act out the different parts with their potato people. If you wish, assign different parts to different potatoes.



Weaving God's Promises

FOLLOW JOSHUA THE LEADER for Preschool

Children take turns being *Joshua* in this game played like Follow the Leader.

Directions:

Invite the children to play Follow Joshua the Leader:

1. Pick one child to be *Joshua*. The other children line up behind *Joshua*.
2. *Joshua* walks around making different movements—moving his or her arms, singing, skipping, hopping or making whatever movement he or she can think of—while the other children follow *Joshua's* movements.
3. Let the children take turns being *Joshua*.





Weaving God's Promises

THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN for Preschool, Primary

With a beach ball, children knock down the *walls of Jericho* made of shoe boxes.

Materials

- shoe boxes
- 2-3 beach balls
- paper horn or whistle, kazoo or other noisemaker
- optional*: balloons

Directions:

Invite the children to play The Walls Come Tumbling Down game:

1. In the center of the room, line up and stack the shoe boxes to make the walls of *Jericho*.
2. Have children stand in a circle around the wall, several feet away. Give the beach balls to a few children in the circle.
3. The children pass the balls around the circle. After around 10 seconds, blow your noisemaker. The children holding the balls when the noise is sounded throw the balls at the *wall* to knock it down.
4. After the first round, repair the *wall* and give the ball to different children. Play until everybody has had a chance to make the *wall* come tumbling down.

Variation:

Give each child a kazoo to blow. Use balloons instead of beach balls.



Weaving God's Promises

PLANT A PROMISED LAND for Elementary

Children plant seedlings or seeds in pans, creating miniature “lands of milk and honey.”

Materials:

small aluminum baking/casserole dishes (the disposable kind), 1 per child
potting soil and/or dirt
flower or vegetable seeds
small flower plant or green plant, or ivy
large spoons
small pebbles
scissors
paper
glue
markers

Preparation:

Use the scissors to punch small holes in the bottom of the pans for water drainage.

Directions:

Hand out the pans and invite each child to plant a “land of milk and honey.” Give the children these directions:

1. Place small pebbles at the bottom of your pan and add potting soil to about half full.
2. Carefully transfer a small flower or green plant or ivy from its container to the pan.
3. Now plant your seeds into the rest of the soil. Water carefully to moisten.
4. Cut a strip of paper about 1" x 6". On it, write *Land of Milk and Honey* and glue it to the side of the pan.



LESSON 8: INTO THE PROMISED LAND



We Believe . . .

Episcopalians can relate to Joshua's openness to God's strange methods of guidance.

Episcopalian ethos teaches that Christians do not know all the answers to tough theological questions, nor do they always have the right insights into God's plan for them. So Episcopalians tend to focus not so much on getting the right answers but on prayerfully discerning what path to take, accepting that many situations are ambiguous and unclear, and offering (and receiving) forgiveness when wrong. Thus after a person is baptized, the officiant prays that God give him or her "an inquiring and discerning heart" (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 308) that is open to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.



Today's Story:



Exodus 16-20, 32; Numbers 9:15-23, 11:1-15

Joshua is Moses' successor. Moses had angrily lashed out at God once in the wilderness and so would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. When the people get to the Jordan River, Moses is shown the land on the other side, then he dies.

Joshua takes over and proves to be a loyal and worthy successor to Moses, faithful to the Lord and following God's commandments. Notice how, in the story of the Battle of Jericho, Joshua obeys God's strange commands for taking over and destroying the city. Would we obey—or scoff?

If you are disturbed by the story of the mass destruction of peoples in the book of Joshua, here is another way to look at the actual circumstances of the conquest of Canaan. The Hebrews who settled in Canaan were a free association of serfs fleeing from the stifling environment of the Canaanite city-states. They insisted that no one was inherently better than any other—thus starting a democracy under God alone. Far from building their nation on the extermination of those outside their group, they welcomed any people who shared their longing for a new society. Thus their

society was inclusive, not exclusive (from *The Interpreter's Commentary on the Bible*).



Words of Faith

Promised Land—the land of Canaan, promised to God's People

Obeys God—to do what God desires and asks

God's goal for us? The Promised Land!



Sharing

Children and youth enjoy hearing about Rahab, the Jericho woman who helped the Israelite spies, and how her life was then spared. They will also enjoy the way that the Israelites, circling the city, blowing horns and yelling, sent the walls of Jericho tumbling down. If you have a variety of “noisemakers” at home (horns, rattles, pots and pans), invite family members to “raise a ruckus” at the appropriate time in the story.

Today’s story is an important part of this year’s story, the story of our salvation. It deserves a good slow telling. Reinforce the idea that even after we sin and rebel against, God still gives us the Promised Land and still makes us God’s people.



Weaving God’s Promises

This Week at Home



- **Sing “Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho.”** March around the dining table (pretending the table is the city of Jericho). When you get to the point in the song where “the walls come a-tumblin’ down,” collapse to the floor.
- **Have everyone create a “red cord” using red yarn.** You could braid a length, then braid two more lengths, then braid all three lengths together. For Rahab, the cord was a message to the Israelite army: “Here I am! Save me! I am on your side!” What could your “red cord” represent to you? Where could you hang your red cord to remember?
- **Play a game of “Find the Spies,”** basically a variation of “Hide and Seek.” Pick two people to be the *spies* and one to be *Rahab*. Other household members take the role of the *king’s soldiers*. Give the *spies* time to hide, with the help of *Rahab*, then *the king’s soldiers* tries to find them. *Rahab*, however, can try to help the *spies* find new hiding places as the game continues. The game ends when a *soldier* finds the *spies*. Play again with everyone switching roles.
- **Build your own Jericho.** Use construction toys, like Legos, Lincoln Logs, K’NEX or simple wooden blocks, to construct a simple circular wall. Reread the portion of today’s story involving the march around Jericho. At the appropriate point in the story, knock down the walls!
- **Talk about Rahab as a hero of the faith.** What made Rahab trust that God was the real God? What might Rahab have been risking to Joshua and the people of Israel? When in our lives do we take chances to follow God? What do we sometimes risk? Consider starting a “heroes of the faith” shelf or display at home. As you hear these great stories each week, add something concrete to the display that represents the hero, like a red piece of yarn for Rahab, a building brick (like a Lego) for Joshua, and a piece of wicker or rattan for Miriam (representing the basket in which she placed Moses). What other heroes and symbols can you think of?



Household Prayer

With you by our side, O Lord, we are always in your Promised Land. In our days and night, stay with us, no matter what, so that whenever we wander away from you, you will always be there to bring us back to your love. *Amen.*

