

date: **1/21/18****Bible Passage: Joshua 6—10**
(Taking the Promised Land)

God Is Powerful

REMEMBER VERSE

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
Isaiah 40:29

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

Some time ago, I went on a short-term mission trip to Cape Town, South Africa. Because it tends to be rainy and cold there during the winter, our team was concerned about the weather. We weren't sure if we could run our vacation Bible school ministry if it was muddy, so we asked God to bless us with good weather.

Most days it was warm, but the last two days we woke up to pouring rain. We had offered most of the VBS outdoors, and we only had access to one indoor room. How could we cram hundreds of children in one tiny building, all day?

As the kids arrived we gave them paper and markers to draw with while we prayed and tried to organize a last-minute plan. One of our team members sat with the kids and drew a picture of our room. In her drawing, it showed a beautiful sunny day outside and the children playing. Two big arms hugged the building and the kids. She explained, "These are God's arms. He's hugging us, protecting us, and keeping us warm." We set the picture in the window as a reminder of God's presence. And we ended up having one of the greatest days of our VBS, with about 30 kids trusting Jesus for the first time.

The following morning, the picture was still in the window. However, rain had leaked through and wet the top of the picture, turning the sun and clouds into a rainbow. It was a beautiful reminder of God's control and power over all things—even when things didn't turn out like we'd planned.

Erika Abdelatif
TruStory Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

Before the Israelites entered Jericho, God gave them specific rules. He warned them not to take any of the gold, silver, or other property they found but instead to give it to God by putting it in the treasury. Still, a greedy man named Achan stole silver, gold, and clothing—all worth a lot of money.

Meanwhile, Joshua sent spies to a city called Ai (pronounced ay-eye) to scope out the land where their next battle would take place. When the spies returned, they told him Ai was only a small city, so they wouldn't need to send many soldiers to fight. After seeing how easily God had handed over Jericho, the Israelites didn't expect a tiny city like Ai to be a problem.

However, because Achan hadn't followed God's instructions, his sin stained the community, and everyone suffered the consequences. When the soldiers attempted to invade Ai, they were chased out, and 36 were killed in battle. The Israelites recognized how they were helpless without God's power. Once Joshua found out what had happened, he and God's people destroyed Achan and his family.

But God, in His love, kept His covenant with the Israelites. He followed through on His promise to give them the land. God said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land" (Joshua 8:1). God showed His power once again and won the battle at Ai.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

It's easy to become frustrated with or laugh at the ignorance and foolishness of the people we read about in The Big God Story. So many times in Scripture, God's people blatantly disobeyed God even in the midst of the incredible miracles He'd done for them. Take, for instance, Joshua and the Israelites. They had seen God do phenomenal things. How could they disobey God after experiencing the parting of a giant river? But we're also without excuse. We forget how God has answered prayer in our lives, and we clutter our days with too much stuff.

When the Israelites fell into trouble, it was because they had wrongly prioritized their lives. When they failed to approach God and listen, everything fell apart. So set aside some time this week to spend a little more time in silence with—and in awe of—God. Get away from all the noise and chaos. Find some place in nature where you can sit and just be. Take a moment to breathe and recognize the grandeur of creation. Lay your situation down before God. Then, just listen.

Recognize that the same God with the power to create the universe is right there with you and loves you more than you could ever imagine.

SMALL GROUP
SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Sources of Power

For today's activity, invite children to interact with science experiments that explore different sources of power.

SUPPLIES

Station 1: Static Electricity

- [Static Electricity Instructions card](#) (see Resources)
- Card stock (1 sheet, 8½" x 11")
- Table or desk (small)
- Balloons (5–6, inflated) 

Station 2: Wind-Up Toys

- [Wind-Up Toys Instructions card](#) (see Resources)
- Card stock (1 sheet, 8½" x 11")
- Table or desk (small)
- Wind-up toys (10–12)

Station 3: Magnets

- [Magnets Instructions card](#) (see Resources)
- Card stock (1 sheet, 8½" x 11")
- Table or desk (small)
- Craft stick (large)
- Paper clip
- Magnet (small)

SET UP

Print the Static Electricity, Wind-Up Toys, and Magnets instructions cards on card stock, fold them in half, and set them up on the tables along with the corresponding activity supplies.

RELATE

We see power displayed in many things in the world, from electricity that lights up a lightbulb to the force that causes a magnet to be attracted to metal. Though the world is full of different sources of power, nothing can compare to God's power. God is powerful, and His power created the world, makes life, and wins battles.

Have children break up into three groups, and invite the groups to rotate through the science activity stations to explore different kinds of power.

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
Isaiah 40:29

Connect

Encourage the members of your community to get to know one another through engaging questions, energizing games, and creative activities.

Question

If you could have a superpower, would you rather have the power to fly, the power to travel through time, the power to read minds, or superhuman strength?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Joshua 6—10

Storytelling Technique: Leaders Acting Out Narrative/First-Person Narrative

God Is Powerful

SUPPLIES

- Timeline image (see Resources)
- Sound effects: Boxing Ring Bell, Knockout Bell, Trumpet (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Poster board (4 sheets)
- Marker
- Spear or javelin (fake) or stick
- Optional: boxing gloves, Bible-times costume

PREPARE AHEAD

Today's portion of The Big God Story will be told from the perspective of Joshua and his "Trainer." Ahead of

time, recruit actors for these roles and set up a time to rehearse before the service. You may choose to play one of the roles yourself. Print copies of the Storytelling section and give a copy to each actor. Set up a time to rehearse before the service. (Note to leader: The town of Ai is pronounced ay-eye.)

SET UP

On one poster board write, "Round One: Jericho." On the second poster board write, "Round Two: Ai." On the third poster board, write, "Round Three: The Five Kings." On the fourth poster board write, "Score: God: 3, Everyone else: 0." Choose a child to hold the poster board signs. Ask the child to walk across the stage holding up the different signs when prompted.

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.
Tech: Cue Boxing Ring Bell sound effect. Joshua practices his boxing jabs in the air.

Trainer: **Joshua, you can do this. Just remember what you've been taught.**

Joshua: **Okay, boss!** Joshua continues boxing the air.

Trainer: **That's Joshua. I train him and keep him in shape for battle. He's carried a lot on his shoulders. God chose him to lead the Israelites after Moses died, which is a huge responsibility. As the new leader, his first big challenge was getting God's people across the Jordan River. Joshua listened to God and followed God's instructions, and the river opened right up! But once the people crossed, there were more important battles to fight. Let me tell you about them.**

Tech: Cue Boxing Ring Bell sound effect. Have the child with the posters hold up the "Round One" poster and walk across the stage.

Trainer: **The first battle Joshua and the Israelites fought was in Jericho.**

Joshua: **God told me that He'd already delivered Jericho into our hands. All we needed to do was follow His instructions!**

Trainer: **God told Joshua and the fighting men to march around the city (Joshua marches excitedly in place) once a day for six days, in complete silence, while following the priests carrying the ark of the covenant. (The ark was a chest that contained the Ten Commandments.) On the seventh day they marched seven times around the city, and at the sound of a trumpet (*Tech: Cue Trumpet sound effect*) they all shouted!**

Joshua (facing the audience): **"Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!"** (Joshua 6:16). Joshua sits down, catching his breath and pretending to take a drink of water.

Trainer: **The walls of Jericho came tumbling down! Because of God's power, the Israelites invaded Jericho and won the city. But Jericho was just one piece of a larger part of land God was giving the Israelites. God showed His people that He was powerful and would win the battles for the Promised Land.**

Tech: Cue Boxing Ring Bell sound effect. Have the child hold up "Round Two" poster and walk across the stage.

Trainer: **Before the battle for Ai, God spoke to Joshua.** Joshua stands again, lightly jabbing the air. Invite the children to open their Bibles to Joshua 8, and ask a volunteer to read verses 1–2 while the rest of the kids follow along. **God told Joshua not to worry because He would fight for them just as He had in Jericho. So Joshua chose 30,000 fighting men and sent them to hide.**

Joshua (to the audience): **“Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert”** (Joshua 8:4). Joshua crouches down, looking stealthy.

Trainer: **Then Joshua chose 5,000 more men to march to Ai and camp outside the city, close enough for the king to see them. When the king saw them, he hurried his men to meet the Israelites in battle and chase them off of the land. But the king didn’t know about the 30,000 Israelite men hiding on the other side of the city! Joshua turned** (Joshua jumps up) **and raised his javelin (a weapon similar to a spear), and the 30,000 men ran to invade the city.**

Joshua (raising javelin): **Just like God promised, we conquered the city of Ai!**

Trainer: **People all over heard about the Israelites’ victories over Jericho and Ai. Kingdoms everywhere were scared of the Israelites, so several cities decided to get together to fight Israel.**

Tech: Cue Boxing Ring Bell sound effect. Have child hold up “Round Three” poster and walk across the stage.

Trainer: **Five kings and their troops got ready to attack. As they prepared once again for battle, the Lord spoke to Joshua.** Invite a volunteer to read Joshua 10:8 while kids follow along. **God would win the battle because God is powerful! The Israelites marched almost 20 miles to the city of Gibeon. The Israelites surprised the Gibeonites, God threw them into confusion, and Israel defeated them** (Joshua 10:10). **The five kings and their troops ran away from the Israelites! Then God sent huge hailstones, and the hail destroyed more enemy troops than the Israelites did with their swords! In his excitement, Joshua began to pray to God.**

Joshua (pretending to pray): **“Sun, stand still over Gibeon”** (Joshua 10:12). After a moment, Joshua begins to celebrate.

Trainer: **God answered Joshua’s prayer! The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and stayed there for almost an entire day! This gave the Israelites more daylight to fight until they took victory over all five of the enemy kings. God is so powerful that He has control over all of creation, and God used His power to help the Israelites defeat another enemy. God won!** *Tech: Cue Knockout Bell sound effect.* Have child hold up the “Score” sign and walk across the stage.

Trainer: **The Israelites witnessed God’s power many times: The Jordan River stopped flowing to allow for the Israelites to cross, the walls of Jericho came down, large hail rained from the sky, and the sun stood still for almost a day. Because they’d seen God display His power, the Israelites knew they could trust God and follow Him. He’d chosen them to be His special people and showed them how to live.**

God loves and wants to protect each one of us, just like He loved and protected the Israelites. No matter what you’re going through right now—no matter what struggles, trouble, or pain—know that God wants to show you His power in your life. Just like He won the battles for the Israelites, He still wins battles today. And just like the Israelites trusted Him, we can trust Him. He is still, and always will

be, the same powerful and mighty God. Share a time you experienced God's power in your life.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: God Is Powerful

Encourage the kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **What did God tell Joshua and the Israelites to do to defeat Jericho?** Joshua 6:3–5
- **How did God use His power to help the Israelites win battles?** Joshua 6:20; 10:11–14
- **What would you think if you saw the sun stay still?**
- **Is there anyone in your life who shows you what it looks like to follow God and trust in His power?**
- **How have you seen God's power in your life?**

Questions for Older Kids

- **How did the fall of Jericho show God's power?** Joshua 6:3–5
- **What did Joshua do after God defeated Ai?** Joshua 8:30, 34–35
- **How did God use His power to help the Israelites win battles?** Joshua 6:20; 10:11–14
- **Is there anyone in your life who shows you what it looks like to follow God and trust in His power?**
- **Why do we need God's power in our lives?**
- **How have you seen God's power in your life?**

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God.

Open a Bible and read Psalm 66:1–5:

Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name.” Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind!

Now invite the children to interact with the BLESS verses by leading them in a call and response taken from the verses. When you say the first line, the kids will repeat that line.

Leader: **Shout for joy to God, all the earth!**

Children: Shout for joy to God, all the earth!

Leader: **Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!**

Children: Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!

Leader: **So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.**

Children: So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

Leader: **All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name.”**

Children: All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing the praises of your name.”

Leader: **Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind!**

Children: Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind!

Finally, invite the children to stand in a circle, and pray a blessing over the group.

May you know that God is powerful, and may you see His power in your life.