

Unit 6: Life of Joshua

OT6.6 Joshua and the Gibeonites Lesson

Scripture: Joshua 9-10

Lesson Goal:

Joshua was leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land. They had just had a great victory at the battle of Jericho and the city of Ai. This story is about Joshua who did not ask God what to do and then was tricked into making a treaty with the Gibeonites. We will discuss everyday situations in which it is easy to forget to ask for God's wisdom. Even when we may seem to have good information and wise people to help us choose, Satan loves to deceive. Only by going to God for wisdom are we able to discern between deception and truth.

Introduction:

This is sixth lesson in Unit 6: Life of Joshua. Joshua was leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land. They had just had a great victory at the battle of Jericho and the city of Ai. This story is about Joshua who did not ask God what to do and then was tricked into making a treaty with the Gibeonites. This lesson is found in the book of Joshua. Joshua is the first Book of History in the Old Testament and was written by Joshua himself. This book tells the history of Israel's conquest of the Promised Land. Let's say the Old Testament Books of history together—Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

Attention Getter: "Decisions"

Decisions, Decisions! Every day we are faced with many decisions. What are we going to wear to school today? What book am I going to read? What am I going to eat for lunch? Whether or not I will play at a friend's house? Whether or not I should tell a lie to avoid getting in trouble?

The decisions we make have consequences. What would happen if you chose to eat only doughnuts? What would be the consequences of going barefoot in a blizzard be?

How do you usually decide what to do? Do you ask your parents? Do you think about what is the truth? Do you try to decide what are the facts and what are opinions? Do you ask God to help you make decisions?

In this story we will learn how Joshua made a bad decision. He thought he was checking out the facts but he didn't ask for God's wisdom. Joshua's bad decision kept the Israelites from driving out all their enemies in Canaan and gaining possession of their land and valuables.

Opening Prayer:

"Father in heaven, Thank you for promising to be with us and answer our prayers. Help us to remember to ask for your wisdom when we have to make decisions. We know that when we do what You want it will always work out for the best. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen."

Memory Verse:

The memory verse is Psalm 17:6 *"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my prayer."*

Lesson Video: <https://youtu.be/8a-aZ4u1BDc>

Let's listen to see how Joshua was tricked by one of Israel's enemies the Gibeonites. Joshua was the man God chose to lead the nation of Israel into the Promised Land. In the time since the Israelites had crossed the Jordan River, Joshua and the Israelites had taken over several cities in the Promised Land of Canaan. Because the people of Canaan worshiped false gods and did many horrible things, God had warned the Israelites not to make friends with the people in the land of Canaan or have anything to do with them.

The Canaanites could not believe how seven of the priests of Israel had carried seven trumpets and walked around the city of Jericho in front of the Ark of the Covenant. Following the priests were the armed men and finally the people of Israel. The people of Israel had done this for six days.

And on the seventh day when they marched seven times around the city, the priests blew their trumpets and the people shouted to the Lord. The walls of Jericho had collapsed and fell to the ground! When the Canaanites heard this, they knew that the God of the Israelites had to be very mighty! Who else could make the walls of a great city like Jericho fall down? The only people in that city who were spared were Rahab and her family because she had hid the spies.

The people of Canaan had seen the amazing victories God had given the Israelite army. They knew that the God of the Israelites was much more powerful than the false gods they worshipped. The Canaanites also heard how the Israelites had destroyed all the people of Jericho and had burned everything in that city except the silver, gold, brass, and iron. The Israelites had brought those things back to the tabernacle and used them as an offering to worship the Lord. This news must have been very frightening to the Canaanites because they knew that the Israelites would soon be coming after them! Would they burn their city, too? Would they take their gold too?

Then all the Canaanite nations heard how one of the Israelite soldiers named Achan had disobeyed God and stolen some of the goods. When the nation of Israel went to battle with Ai that disobedience had made the Israelites lose!

Thirty six of the Israelites had died. But this was not because the men of Ai were such good soldiers. No! It was because the God of Israel wanted His people to trust and obey Him! They must have been amazed that the God of Israel could tell the leader Joshua who had sinned so he could be punished.

The guilty man Achan admitted that he had taken a beautiful robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels. He said that he took them and hid them in the ground inside his tent. Joshua told his soldiers to go find the stolen goods that were buried in Achan's tent.

After punishing him God told Joshua to go back to Ai and attack it. God said that He would give Joshua and the Israelites victory in the battle. And this time, they could take all the gold, silver, and livestock and keep it for themselves! So Joshua did as the Lord said and took the whole army to attack Ai. They set up an ambush. Part of the army hid in a valley. The rest of the army marched up the hill to the city and then retreated. The army of Ai followed them and left the city unguarded. Then the rest of Joshua's army came in behind them and ambushed them. The men of Ai were driven out into the desert! Another city had been conquered by the Israelites!

After the Israelites took the city of Ai, word quickly spread of their victory. The Canaanites heard how the God of the Israelites had commanded them to destroy the entire city of Jericho because it was so sinful. They were terrified!

All the kings who lived in the land met to decide what to do about the Israelites. The five kings who came to the meeting were from the hill country, from the western foothills, and from all along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far north as Lebanon. They came from the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites! This was a big meeting!

Obviously everybody was afraid of Israel. Finally the kings all decided that there was only one thing that would work--everyone must come together and make war against Joshua and the Israelites!

But not everybody agreed with these kings as to what to do about the Israelites! One group of people did not think war against the Israelites would help them. These people lived in the towns around Gibeon. They knew that the one true God was helping the Israelites and God had told the Israelites to destroy all the Canaanites because of their wickedness! So instead of joining those gathering to

fight the Israelites, the Gibeonites came up with a devious plan to save their lives. They decided to trick Joshua and the Israelites!

A few of the Gibeonite men packed up some dried-out, moldy bread in some old, cracked leather bags. They dressed up in clothes that were worn-out, dirty, and dusty. They put on old shoes with holes in the bottoms. Then they loaded their donkeys and traveled to where Joshua and the Israelites were camped.

When they arrived at the Israelite camp at Gilgal they told Joshua and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant land to ask you to make a peace treaty with us." The Israelites didn't answer right away. They remembered God's warning about making friends with the people of Canaan.

"How do we know you don't live nearby?" Joshua asked. "For if you do, we cannot make a treaty with you."

"This bread was hot from the ovens when we left our homes, they replied, "but now, it is dry and moldy. These wineskins were new when we filled them, but now they are old and split open. And our clothing and sandals are worn out from our very long journey."

Joshua and the Israelites examined their food but did not ask God what to do. Joshua and the other Israelite leaders decided the Gibeonites must be telling the truth. Joshua said, "We promise that our countries will be friends! We will not attack you!" That was a big mistake!! They should have asked God about this important decision.

The Gibeonites' trick had worked. They would be safe. Three days after making the treaty, the Israelites learned that these people actually lived nearby! They sent men to investigate and reached their town in three days.

What was Joshua to do! He had made a decision without consulting God and now he faced a problem! He knew he had to keep the promise of the treaty because he had told God he would. He didn't want the children of Israel to get into trouble with God! He remembered what happened when Achan sinned and knew that God was serious about keeping promises.

The people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty. The leaders replied, "Since we have sworn an oath in the presence of the Lord, we cannot touch the Gibeonites. Divine anger would come upon us if we broke our promise."

Joshua went to see the Gibeonites. "Why did you lie to us and say that you lived in a distant land when you live right here among us? You tricked me into making a treaty," he said, "I can't go back on my promise. But I can't let you get away with your lies, either. So, for the rest of your lives, you must work for us. From now on, you will chop wood and carry water to God's house, the Tabernacle, where our people worship Him."

The Gibeonites gladly agreed. They would have to work for the Israelites, but at least they'd be safe. The Israelites went back to their camp. They knew that trouble would probably come from their friendship with the Gibeonites--the people who had lied to them. It was a hard way to learn an important lesson. Always talk to God before making a decision.

The kings of the other tribes in Canaan heard about the treaty that the Gibeonites had made with Israel and they were very upset. This treaty would mean that the Gibeonites and the Israelites would be on the same side! Now the Israeli army was even bigger and stronger than before.

One of the kings named Adoni-Zedek had an idea. He called the four other kings together and they planned an attack against Gibeon since they had made peace with Joshua and the children of Israel. They decided that it would be easier to attack the Gibeonites rather than with Israel directly!

The attack of the five armies caught the Gibeonites completely by surprise! They were outnumbered! They needed help, and they needed it fast! They sent messengers to Joshua at his camp in Gilgal. "Come at once! Save us! Help us!" they pleaded. "All the Amorite kings who live in the hill country have joined forces to attack us."

Joshua knew he had made a promise. And even though the Gibeonites had lied to the Israelites, Joshua wanted to keep his promise because he loved and obeyed God. Joshua and his entire army set out for Gibeon. "Don't be afraid of them," the Lord told Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them."

Encouraged by God's words, Joshua and his army marched through the night to join the Gibeonites. When the enemy armies woke up the next morning, how amazed they must have been when they saw Joshua's army!! Instead of just the Gibeonites, they had to fight against Joshua and the entire Israeli army! That night the Israelites took the Amorite armies by surprise and chased them as they fled.

Then God made a miracle happen. Instead of the enemy armies being organized and coming against Joshua's army they were totally confused! They could not think straight! The armies just began to run away from Joshua and the Israelites! This is just what God had said He would do.

The armies of Israel could easily kill them as they chased them down the road that went to Beth Horon. But God was NOT finished with them yet! As the Amorites retreated, the Lord sent a terrible hailstorm. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword.

When the five kings saw that their armies were losing the battle they fled and hid in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua commanded, "Cover the opening of the cave with large rocks, and put guards at the entrance to keep the kings inside. The rest of you continue chasing the enemy and don't give them a chance to get back to their towns. The Lord has given you victory over them."

Joshua knew that it was important to be sure all the enemies were beaten before they had a chance to reorganize and attack again. There was only one problem. The sun was going to go down soon. If it got dark, the Israelites wouldn't be able to see the enemy soldiers and many of the enemies would escape.

God had said that they would win this battle and Joshua wanted to finish the job now. So Joshua prayed very loudly to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon and the moon over the valley of Aijalon."

The Lord answered their prayers! The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and did not go down for about a whole day! There had never been a day like that before it or after it! Imagine what the people thought! God stopped the sun from going down! That was how God helped the Israelites win the fight! The Israelites totally wiped out the five armies except for a tiny remnant that managed to reach their fortified towns.

Once the battle was over Joshua returned to the cave where the kings were and told his men, "Remove the rocks covering the opening of the cave, and bring the five kings to me." Don't be afraid. Be courageous. This is what God will do to all our enemies."

Then Joshua told the commanders of his army, "Come and put your feet on the kings' necks." The kings were then executed and their bodies were hung on five trees! At sunset they buried them in the cave where they had been hiding and placed a great pile of stones at the opening of the cave.

Joshua then captured and destroyed the town of Makkedah. Joshua and his army conquered a great part of the whole country in this one battle—the nations and kings of the hill country, the lowlands, the mountain slopes, and the plains

The Israelites went to capture the cities of Libnah then Eglon, Hebron and Debir before returning victoriously to Gilgal. All were destroyed, as the Lord had commanded. This was all accomplished in one campaign because the Lord God of Israel was fighting for His people.

Then Joshua and the Israelites rested from war as they returned to their camp at Gilgal. God had kept His promise to Joshua that he would be successful in taking the Promised Land!

It can be hard to make wise decisions! It seems that everyone has different ideas about what is good to do. But when we ask God for His help, we are making the wisest decision we ever could! We can talk to God and trust Him to help us because He loves us and His ways really are the very best.

When are some times that kids your age have to make decisions? Perhaps it is when you have to tell the truth and admit that you have done something wrong! Or maybe it is when parents ask kids to do chores without complaining. Or perhaps they have to decide who they will be friends with at school.

What are some good things to do when you have to make a decision? Ask God for help. Read the Bible and look for God's directions or guidelines. Talk to an adult about the decision. Think about what will happen after you make the decision. What are some unwise ways to make a decision? Only think about what you want. Do whatever is easiest. Make a decision without thinking or praying about it.

How does talking to God help someone make a wise decision? Talking to God reminds us that we want to love and obey Him. Talking to God about the decisions you have to make also lets Him help us choose wisely.

Let's read Psalm 17:6 together. *"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my prayer."* This verse says that when we ask God to hear us He will! Let's ask God to hear our prayers when we have a decision to make!

Remember ask God for help to make any decision!

Review Questions: "Star Card"

Preparation: You will need a CD or Ipod to play music, markers, one index card and one envelope for each child. In advance draw a star on one index card. Place a card in each envelop including the star card.

Procedure: Students are to sit in a circle. Give each child an envelope. Children pass envelopes around the circle as you play the music. After several moments stop the music. Children stop passing the envelopes and each opens an envelope to look for the star card. Child with the star card answers one of the following review questions.



1. What command had God given to Joshua about conquering the land of Canaan? (Joshua and the Israelites were to kill all the people of Canaan because they were idol worshippers. God knew that they would cause the nation of Israel a lot of trouble in the future if they were not destroyed.)
2. What were some of the events that happened that made the Canaanite people afraid of the God of Israel? (The Canaanites heard how God had given the Israelites victory at the battle of Jericho and the battle of Ai. They heard how the walls of the city of Jericho fell and all the people were killed except for Rahab and her family. They heard how God had given Joshua knowledge about who had stolen things from God during the battle of Jericho and how Achan was punished. They heard how the Israelites had taken all the gold, silver, and iron and then burned the cities. All this news made them very afraid.)

3. What did the five kings who lived in the land of Canaan do when they heard about the Israelites? (They met to decide what to do about the Israelites. Everyone except the Gibeonites wanted to go together to fight the Israelites in one big battle.)
4. Why did the Gibeonites not want to fight the Israelites? (They heard about the victories that God had given the Israelites and they thought that any battle against them would be lost.)
5. What did the Gibeonites decide to do instead of fight Israel? (They decided to try to trick the Israelites into making a treaty with them.)
6. What trick did the Gibeonites use? (A few of the Gibeonite men packed up some dried-out, moldy bread in some old, cracked leather bags. They dressed up in clothes that were worn-out, dirty, and dust. They put on old shoes with holes in the bottoms. Then they loaded their donkeys and traveled to where Joshua and the Israelites were camped. They said they were from a far away country and wanted to make a treaty with Israel.)
7. What did Joshua do before he made the decision to trust the Gibeonites? (He looked at their moldy bread, their old shoes with holes, and their old worn out clothes and thought that they were telling him the truth.)
8. Why do you think he made the decision to make a treaty with them? (He trusted his own judgment instead of asking God.)
9. What happened as a result of Joshua's decision? (Three days later Joshua found out that the Gibeonites had lied and were actually neighbors. The nation of Israel was very angry that the leaders of Israel had made such a bad decision.)
10. Why could Joshua not nullify the treaty with the Gibeonites? (Joshua and the leaders had given their word and had sworn an oath to God that the people of Gibeon could live.)
11. What did Joshua tell the people of Gibeon? (He told them that they would remain alive but because they had lied that they would become servants to the Israelites. They would have to become wood cutters and water barriers for the people of Israel.)
12. When the other kings of Canaanite heard about the treaty that Joshua had made with the Gibeonites, what did they do? (They had a meeting and decided to join forces and go against the Gibeonites because they felt that they could defeat them. They did not want the Gibeonites to join forces with the Israelites in a big battle that they would lose.)
13. What surprise did the Canaanite kings get when they went against the Gibeonites? (The Gibeonites ran to ask help from Joshua and his men and the Israelite army came to their defense.)
14. What happened before Joshua led his army in defense of the Gibeonites? (God told Joshua to not be afraid. God said that Joshua would give him victory and not one of the Canaanites would stand against him.)
15. What miracles did God perform in Joshua's battle against the five kings and their armies? (God caused the enemy soldiers to be confused and to be afraid and run away from the battle. As they were fleeing God caused large hailstones to fall on their heads. The hail killed more of the soldiers that the Israelite army did!)
16. As their armies were fleeing, what did the five kings do? (They ran and hid in a cave at Makkedah.)
17. What did Joshua tell his men to do while the kings were hiding? (Joshua told his men to seal up the cave with stones and then he posted some men to guard it while his army went on ahead to pursue the enemy soldiers as they were running away.)
18. What prayer did Joshua pray when he saw that evening was coming and the Israelite army had not yet captured and killed all the enemy soldiers? (He asked God to make the sun and

moon stand still for about one day. God answered his prayer and performed a great miracle in making the day 48 hours long!!)

19. After destroying the army, what did Joshua and his army of men do? (They returned to the cave where the kings were hiding, brought them out, and destroyed them all. They hung their bodies on the trees until evening and then buried them in the cave where they had been hiding.)
20. What happened to Israel after winning this great battle? (God gave them victory over all the other cities in the region, in the foothills, and the mountains. Joshua destroyed all the cities and the towns just as God had commanded. God gave them a great victory throughout all the land.)
21. What are some important lessons we can learn from this Bible story? (Don't make decisions without asking God for directions. Learn to trust God and rely on His help. God is able to perform great miracles on our behalf if we trust and obey Him.)
22. When are some times children your age have to make decisions? (Some examples might be when other kids want to copy their homework; when parents ask them to do chores without complaining; when playing with friends.)
23. What are some good things to do when you have to make a decision? (Ask God for help. Read the Bible and look for God's guidelines. Talk to an adult about the decision. Think about what will happen after you make the decision.)
24. What are some unwise ways to make a decision? (Only think about what you want. Do whatever is easiest. Make a decision without thinking or praying about it.)
25. How does talking to God help someone make a wise decision? (Talking to God reminds us that we want to love and obey Him.)
26. Why do you think it is a good idea to talk to God about the decisions you make? (He helps us choose wisely. He is wiser than we are and He knows the future. He has greater power than we do to solve our problems.)

Bible Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Relay

Say: "Our memory verse is Psalm 17:6 *"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my prayer."* Have students locate memory verse in scripture and read aloud several times.

Say: "This verse means that when we pray, God will hear and answer our requests. King David wrote this psalm when he was being chased by King Saul so he was asking God to help save him. God heard his prayer and protected David and his men. We too can trust God to listen to our prayers and answer them!"

Preparation: You will need Bibles, large sheets of paper, markers, and tape. Print "Psalm 17:6" at the top of a large sheet of paper making one paper for each team. Tape papers to the wall on one side of the room. Place a marker and a Bible open to Psalm 17:6 next to each paper. (Put a sticky note in the Bible, in case someone closes it.)

Procedure: Divide class into two teams. Teams line up on the side of the room opposite from the papers. At your signal, the first student in each line runs to the paper, reads the verse from Bible and writes the first word of the verse on the paper. The student then leaves the Bible open, lays down marker and returns to tag the next person in line. Second student then runs to find and write the second word of the verse. Play continues until all teams complete the entire verse.

Read Psalm 17:6 aloud together, and ask the following questions: Why does the writer of this Psalm say he will pray to God? (He knows God will answer His prayer.) What happened in today's story

when Joshua forgot to pray to God and ask Him about the Gibeonites? (He got into trouble and was deceived.) When are some times you need to pray to God and ask for His help?

Group Learning Activity: “Walk and Talk” (Grades K-3)

Purpose: To provide an active game option to encourage children to think about examples of situations in which they could practice making decisions God’s way.

Preparation: You will need an iPod or CD of music, a stack of index cards, markers, paper bag, and masking tape. Print students’ names on individual pieces of scrap paper and place papers in bag.

Procedure: Distribute 2 or 3 index cards to each student in class along with markers or writing pencils. Have students write or draw people, places or events that remind them of times then kids have to make decisions. Say: “Who can help kids make wise decisions? Write one name on each index card.” (God parents, friends, police officer, teacher) Where is a place a kid your age might have to make a decision? (school, park, shopping mall, camp) When might be a time that a kid your age might have to make a decision? Name a time or event. (recess, Christmas, vacation) Students are to make individual “decision” cards by writing one word or drawing one picture on each index card.



When students complete the decision cards, they are to lay cards face up on the floor to create a circular path with many turns and forks so that there are many opportunities for students to decide which way to go. Students are to tape the cards in place with masking tape.

Students are to play a game similar to a cakewalk. Play a song on the iPod or CD while students walk along the path. After several minutes, stop the music. Each student stands on the card closest to him or her. Draw a name from the bag. The student whose name is drawn must give an example of a decision that a student would make using the person, place, or event named on the decision card upon which he or she is standing. Continue play as time allows.

Table Alternative: Students pass cards around the table until you stop the music.

Group Learning Activity: “Sun Up Game” (Grades K-3)

Preparation: You will need a yellow inflated balloon. You may want to have a couple of extra balloons in case one pops before the game is over.

Procedure: Have the students form a circle facing inward. Say: “In our lesson God did something amazing. He made the sun stand still in the sky all through the night. Let’s pretend this balloon is the sun and let’s see if we can keep it from falling.” Explain that you will toss the balloon up and you need the students to keep it from falling to the ground. Tell them not to catch or hold the balloon, but to gently hit it upward if it comes near them. Play as time allows.

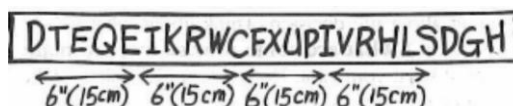


Say: “We were not able to keep our pretend sun in the air for very long but God can do things that we could never do. God answers the prayers of His people. Sometimes his answers come in the form of amazing miracles! He answered Joshua’s prayer for a longer day so that Israel could win the battle.”

Group Learning Activity: “Measured Words” (Grades 3-5)

Purpose: To provide an activity on which students can discuss decisions that they often make.

Preparation: You will need a masking tape, markers, rulers, pencils, paper. Make a masking tape line at least 4 ½ feet long on the floor or wall.



Print each letter of the word “decision” on the masking tape line, spacing the letters 6 inches apart. Print random letters from the alphabet in between the letters. Make one line for each group of no more than six students.

Procedure: Say: “What do we use to measure? (We use rulers, scales, and measuring tapes.) We use these measuring devices to find the length, width, and weight of objects. Measuring tapes and scales help us to accurately describe objects. Today we are going to use rulers to discover an important word from this lesson.”

Divide the class into groups of no more than six students. Give each group a ruler, a pencil and a sheet of paper. Groups are to print the first letter from the masking tape line on their papers and then measure 6 inches and write the next letter. Groups continue to the end of their masking tape line to discover the word “decision.”

Say: “In order to find the correct word what did you choose to do? (Groups had to decide to follow the directions and measure carefully in order to find the word.) What other kinds of decisions do kids your age often have to make? (You have to decide what to wear to school, what book to read, etc.) Sometimes it is not easy to know what decision we should make. We need to read God’s Word and find out what God’s will is for our lives.”

Discuss everyday situations in which it is easy to forget to ask for God’s wisdom. Even when we may seem to have good information and wise people to help us choose, Satan loves to deceive. Only by going to God for wisdom are we able to discern between deception and truth.

(This activity makes a good introduction to the Bible Study below.)

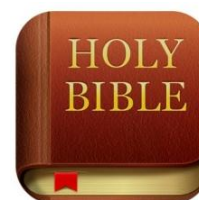
Group Learning Activity: “Making Decisions God’s Way” (Grades 3-5)

Purpose: To help students make decisions biblically.

Preparation: You will need Bibles, pencils, paper, and spiritual notebooks.

Procedure: Have students locate the following scriptures and discuss the principles being taught in each one:

- *Proverbs 13:1* “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.” (God wants us to listen to the advice of our parents when we are facing a decision.)
- *Proverbs 13: 20* “Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.” (God wants us to seek wisdom from godly people. Pastors and teachers can help us make good decisions.)
- *James 1:5-8* “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.” (The wisdom that is being talked about here is the ability to make good decision in difficult circumstances. Whenever we need wisdom, we can pray to God and he will generously supply what we need. We do not have to stumble around to find answers. We can ask for God’s wisdom to guide our choices. When we ask God for wisdom we need to respect His authority and will. To learn God’s will we need to read His Word and ask Him how to obey it. We must do what he tells us. To “believe and not doubt” means not only believing in the existence of God and also believing in His loving care. It includes relying on God and expecting that He will hear and answer when we pray. We must put away our own selfish desires and seek to do what He wants. We need to have confidence that God can change our desires so they are consistent with His purposes.)



- *Matthew 21:22* “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” (This verse is not a guarantee that we can get anything we want simply by asking and believing. God does not grant requests that would hurt us or others or would violate his own nature or will. Jesus’ statement is not a blank check. To be fulfilled our requests must be in harmony with the principles of God’s kingdom. The stronger our belief, the more likely our prayers will be in line with God’s will and then God will be happy to grant them.)

Review the memory verse Psalm 17:6 “I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my prayer.” Conclude the discussion with this summary of “How to make a decision”. You may wish to write these ideas on the whiteboard.

Say: “What are some good things to do when you have to make a decision? Ask God for help. Read the Bible and look for God’s directions or guidelines. Talk to an adult about the decision. Think about what will happen after you make the decision. What are some unwise ways to make a decision? Only think about what you want. Do whatever is easiest. Make a decision without thinking or praying about it. How does talking to God help someone make a wise decision? Talking to God reminds us that we want to love and obey Him. Talking to God about the decisions you have to make also lets Him help us choose wisely. “

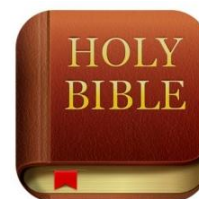
Have students record what they have learned in their Spiritual Notebooks.

Group Learning Activity: “Showing Mercy” (Grades 3-5)

Purpose: To help students make decisions biblically.

Preparation: You will need Bibles, pencils, paper, and spiritual notebooks.

Procedure: Have students locate the following scriptures and discuss the principles being taught in each one:



- Micah 6:8 “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” What does God require of us, or want us to do? Tell one way you can act justly (be fair), love mercy (treat others with undeserved kindness) or walk humbly with God (read His Word and obey what He commands). We are to be fair in our treatment of others, live justly or rightly in accordance with God’s Word, and be humble. Humility is putting the needs of others above our own or loving others as ourselves. This verse means we are to think rightly about ourselves and not to regard ourselves as better than others.
- Matthew 5:43-44 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Verse 44 gives a good example of what it means to show mercy. What is it? How can you obey this verse? Jesus is telling us not to retaliate when others do us wrong. We are not to take the law into our own hands. By loving and praying for our enemies we can overcome evil with good. If we treat our enemies with kindness we are truly showing that Jesus is the Lord of our life because this is only possible for those who have given themselves fully to God. Only He can deliver people from their natural selfishness.
- Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” How does God show His mercy to us? (God showed His mercy to us through giving of His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. God’s love for us was so great that He was willing to sacrifice His only Son.) How can we show mercy to others? (We too must be willing to love others enough that we will sacrifice our own wants and desires in order to meet their needs. Love means action. It is easy to love those who love us but it is not so easy to love those who treat us wrongly. But God extended His mercy to us even though we had sinned against Him. Our sin was an affront to God. We treated God wrongly and yet He gave us mercy by extending salvation to all.)

- Romans 12:17 “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.” What does this verse tell us to do? (Do what is right.) What does it tell us not to do? What does repaying evil for evil mean? (To be mean to someone because they were mean to you.) This verse summarized the meaning of Christian living. If we love someone the way Christ loves us, we will be willing to forgive. If we have experienced God’s grace we will want to pass it on to others. Grace is God’s undeserved favor. When we treat others with mercy we are treating them like Christ treated us.

Say: “How did Joshua show that he loved and obeyed God? (He showed mercy to the Gibeonites and kept his promise to help them.) How did God help Joshua win the battle against the five kings and their armies? (He confused the soldiers so they began to flee. He sent hailstones on the enemy. He stopped the sun and moon for 24 hours.) Why might it have been hard for Joshua to keep his promise to help the Gibeonites? (The Gibeonites had deceived him and caused him to disobey God.) How can we learn what is right to do? (Read the Bible. Talk to wise people. Practice being kind. Pray.) When are some times that it is hard for kids your age to be kind and show mercy to others? (When other kids call you names; when it seems that others are not being fair; when the umpire calls an out when you think you are safe; when someone forgets to keep a promise.)

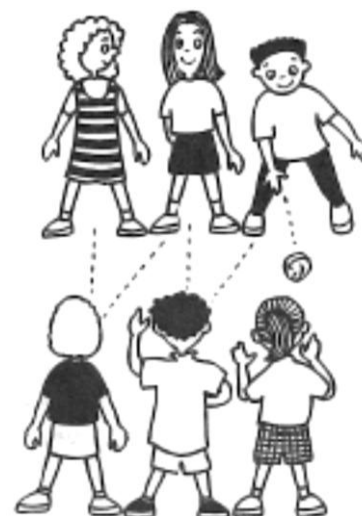
Have students record what they have learned in their Spiritual Notebooks.

Group Learning Activity: “Foil Ball” (Grades 1-5)

Preparation: You will need an iPod or CD player and some music, aluminum foil, and one marble. Make several small balls from pieces of foil. Hide a marble in the center of one of the balls.

Procedure: Say: “In our lesson today Joshua showed mercy to the Gibeonites by defending them against the enemy soldiers. We are going to play a game today that will help us understand when we need to show mercy to others.”

Have students line up to play a tossing game. Divide the class into two groups. Groups line up facing each other leaving about 3 feet between the two lines. Using the foil ball with the marble in it, the students toss the ball down the lines in a zig zag pattern. When the ball gets to the end of the line, the last student in each line runs to the front of his or her line and then tosses the ball to the student across from him or her. Practice a few times so students get used to tossing and catching the ball in the correct pattern.



Play a song on the IPOD or CD player while students play the game again. Add additional balls you prepared so that students are tossing three or four balls at the same time. After a few moments, stop the music. The student holding the ball containing the marble must answer one of the discussion questions below. Rewrap the foil balls and play additional rounds as time allows.

Mercy Discussion:

Say: “How did Joshua show that he loved and obeyed God? (He showed mercy to the Gibeonites and kept his promise to help them.) How did God help Joshua win the battle against the five kings and their armies? (He confused the soldiers so they began to flee. He sent hailstones on the enemy. He stopped the sun and moon for 24 hours.) Why might it have been hard for Joshua to keep his promise to help the Gibeonites? (The Gibeonites had deceived him and caused him to disobey God.) When are some times that it is hard for kids your age to be kind and show mercy to others? (When other kids call you names; when it seems that others are not being fair; when the umpire calls an out when you think you are safe; when someone forgets to keep a promise.)

Have a student read Romans 12:17 “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.” What does this verse tell us to do? What does it tell us not to do? (We are to love people the way Christ loves people and be willing to forgive them. We are not to retaliate when they do us harm.) Why do you think God wants us to show mercy to others? (He wants us to be like Him.) When has someone shown mercy to you? When might you be able to obey God by showing mercy to a friend or a family member?

Group Learning Activity: “Mercy Shots” (Grades K-5)

Purpose: This activity provides a game that helps students understand the meaning of mercy.

Preparation: You will need 6-8 slips of paper, marker, paper bag, a container such as wastebasket or cardboard box; a bean bag or soft Nerf ball. On three or four slips of paper print the word “mercy”. Place the slips of paper you wrote on along with the remaining blank slips of paper into the paper bag.

Say: “When Joshua defended the Gibeonites from the enemy soldiers he was showing them mercy. To show mercy means to be kind to people even when they don’t deserve that kindness. Today we are going to play a game that will help us understand what the word “mercy” means.”

Procedure: Have students line up about 5 feet from the container. Place the paper bag and the beanbag or Nerf ball in front of the line. The first student in line faces away from the container and throws the bean bag over his or her head attempting to get the bean bag or Nerf ball into the container. Student then gives the bean bag to the next student in line and then goes to the end of the line. Each student in line takes a turn. When the first student is back at the front of the line, invite the student to draw a paper from the bag. If the paper is blank, the student attempts the backward throw again. If the paper says “mercy” on it, the student may stand about 1 foot from the container and face it when tossing the beanbag or ball into the container. The student is getting a “mercy” shot.

Conclude the game by asking, “How did the game changed when you could pick a slip of paper? (It was a lot easier if you could take a mercy shot. You could take the mercy shot even if you didn’t do anything to deserve that shot.) To show mercy means to be kind to people even when they don’t deserve that kindness.”

Lead students in a discussion by asking the following question: “When can kids your age show mercy to each other?” (Forgive your friends and still play with them even when they are mean to you.)

See “Mercy Discussion” above in “Foil Ball”.

Craft Learning Activity: Sun Clock Craft (K-3)

Preparation: You will need two paper plates and brass brad fastener for each student, markers, and scissors.

Procedure: Have students draw on the paper plate a center mark for the nose and where they will attach the brass brad fastener. Add eyes and a happy face with the marking pens. Add the numbers on the clock. Put the 12 at the top first, 6 on the bottom, 3 on the right and 9 on the left. Fill in the missing numbers between the other points to form the minutes on the clock. Small dots can be added for the minute lines.



Decorate the face of the sun as desired. Yellow center for the sun and red and yellow lines along the edge of the plate for the sun rays. Use the second paper plate to make the hands. Cut out a rectangle. Cut the rectangle in two parts lengthwise. Color the hand red and attach the hands to the clock using the brass brad fastener.

Say: “Today we learned that God answers the prayers of His people. When Joshua prayed for God’s help, God made the sun and moon stand still. Who can tell me how many hours are in a day? (24

hours) God made the sun shine for almost 24 hours so that His people could have victory over their enemies. This sun clock reminds us of God’s miracle that day. Remember “God answers the prayers of His people.”

Craft Learning Activity: “Sun and Moon Stood Still” Magnets (Grades K-5)

Preparation: You will need white, yellow and blue craft foam sheets, squiggly eyes, scissors, sticky magnet strips, poster board and glue. Make a pattern for a sun shape, moon shape and star shape from poster board.

Say: “In this lesson God had promised Joshua a great victory in the battle against the kings of the Canaanites. When Joshua prayed and ask God to make the sun and moon stand still, God kept His promise and performed a great miracle by extending the day 24 hours. Today we are going to make a craft the reminds us of this great miracle.”

Procedure: Have students cut two large yellow circles –8” circle and a 4” circle from the foam sheets. Have students use patterns from poster board to cut a sun shape from the yellow foam sheet. Cut circle of white foam to fit inside the sun shape. Use patterns of star and moon to cut blue foam shapes. Glue the smaller circle of foam to the lower portion of the larger circle. Glue sun shape inside the larger circle of yellow foam. Glue squiggly eyes and use a marking pen to make a smiley face to the sun. Glue star and moon to the smaller circle. Attach a sticky magnet strip to the back of the foam circles. See diagram.



Craft Learning Activity: “Crazy Sunglasses” (Grades K-3)

Preparation: You will need to print out the template of sunglasses below on white or colored cardstock making one copy for each student. You will also need decorative materials such as pom pom balls, glitter, puffy paint, markers, crayons, colored pencils, and cellophane paper for the lenses.

Say: “In this lesson God had promised Joshua a great victory in the battle against the kings of the Canaanites. When Joshua prayed and ask God to make the sun and moon stand still, God kept His promise and performed a great miracle by extending the day 24 hours. Today we are going to make a crazy sunglasses to remind us of this great miracle.”



Procedure: Have students color the sunglass template with markers, crayons, or colored pencils if you have used the white cardstock. Use a single color or make the eyeglasses as colorful as you want. Have students use scissors to cut out all three pieces of the eye glasses. Be sure to cut out the eye holes as well. (Younger children may need help with this part of the activity.) The front frame has a pair of side tabs, each bordered by a dashed line. Fold the side tabs toward the back and Unfold. Crease the side tabs. Glue the arms onto the front frame. Glue the straight end of each arm (the part that extends over the ears) onto a side tab. You can decorate your eye glasses further with glitter glue or puffy paint, rhinestones, and other small punched out shapes. If you use glitter or puffy paint you will need to wait for it to dry on your eyeglasses before proceeding to the next step. Add lenses. Make the lenses out of cellophane paper or transparency film. Cut a pair to a size and shape that covers each eyehole. Glue the lenses at the back of the frame. Once the glue dries, wear your crazy sunglasses.

Craft Learning Activity: “Chenille People” (Grades 3-5)

Preparation: You will need craft sticks, tan chenille, croutons, paper lunch bags, glue, scissors, and wire cutters.

Say: “In this lesson the Gibeonites played a deceptive trick on Joshua. They pretended to come from a long distance by dressing up in worn out clothing and shoes. Today we are going to make a craft that will help us remember how these people looked.”



Procedure: Cut a 5 inch piece of chenille for the head. Wrap one stem of the chenille around the craft stick for the arms. Twist the chenille in a circle for the head. Slip the head piece behind the arms and glue into place. Cut a robe out of the paper lunch bag. Crinkle up the robe to give a worn appearance. Glue it onto the body. Put a crouton at the end of each arm and wrap the chenille around it.

You can also use another color of twisted chenille for hair and draw or make patches for the robe out of paper or other materials. Make feet.

Optional: You can draw a large stick figure on a piece of construction paper and then glue the crinkled up robe directly onto the construction paper. Glue croutons onto the construction paper. Finish the stick figure by drawing the hands, face, and hair.



Craft Learning Activity: “Story Art” Fresco (Grades K-3)

Purpose: Students will make pictograph drawings of the events in the Bible story to recall and retell the Bible lesson.

Preparation: You will need butcher paper, measuring stick, scissors, masking tape, crayons or markers. Cut a piece of butcher paper about 10 feet long. Use masking tape to attach the paper low enough on the wall so that students will be able to draw on it.

Procedure: **Say:** “For this lesson we are going to make a fresco to help us remember the events in the story. A fresco is a wall painting on wet plaster. Frescos or wall paintings were used in Bible times to record events. These paintings often give us clues about the clothes that people wore then, the tools they used, the area they lived in, and the things they did in Bible times. Our fresco will not be on wet plaster but on a mural.”



Divide the students into eight groups to make a wall mural of the story. Assign each group a different event from the story: (1) the Gibeonites traveling with loaded-down donkeys; (2) the Gibeonites showing Joshua and the leaders their moldy bread and old leather bags; (3) Joshua and the leaders making a treaty with the Gibeonites; (4) the Gibeonites carrying water and wood; (5) the kings and their armies coming to fight the Gibeonites and Joshua’s army; (6) God confusing the armies and sending hailstones to kill the fleeing soldiers; (7) Joshua praying to God and asking that the sun and moon stand still for one day; (8) Joshua’s men burying the kings who were hiding in the cave.

Assign the groups to sections of the butcher paper in story order. Students are to work together to draw their group's story event on the butcher paper. As students work, continue discussing examples of daily situations in which we make decisions. Use the following questions to encourage participation in the discussion: "What did Joshua do before he made the decision to trust the Gibeonites? Why do you think he made the decision he did? What happened as a result of Joshua's decision? When are some times kids your age have to make decisions? (Examples are when other kids want to copy their homework; when parents ask them to do chores without complaining; when playing with friends, etc.) How was Joshua's decision to defend the Gibeonites different the second time? (He prayed to God and ask for wisdom and God promised to give him victory.) What are some good thing to do when you have to make a decision? (Ask God for help. Read the Bible and look for God's guidelines. Talk to an adult about the decision. Think about what will happen after you make the decision.) What are some unwise ways to make a decision? (Only think about what you want. Do whatever is easier. Make a decision without thinking or praying about it.) How does talking to God help someone make a wise decision? (Talking to God reminds us that we want to love and obey Him.) Why do you think it is a good idea to talk to God about the decisions that you make? (God helps us choose wisely.)

Read the memory verse Psalm 17:6. What does this verse ask God to do? What is a decision you want to talk to God about?

Craft Learning Activity: "Promise Keeper" Cards (Grades K-3)

Preparation: You will need Bibles, index cards, markers, legal sized envelopes, scissors, and a large sheet of paper. Make a sample card and holder following the directions below.

Procedure: Lead children in a discussion of different situation in which children their age may keep their promises. Print the children's ideas on a large sheet of paper. Show the sample card and holder. Say: "Today you are going to make a promise keeper holder that will hold a promise that you can keep this week."



Examples of promises: "I will make my bed every day. I will help my mom clean up the dishes after dinner. I will pick up the toys in my room. I will carry out the trash. I will do my homework. I will help someone at school. I will talk kindly to my brother and sister."

Each child chooses a situation in which he or she wants to remember to keep his or her promises. Distribute the index cards. On the index card, the child should draw a picture of himself or herself in the chosen situation. Ask the questions below as the children work.

Read 2 Samuel 7:28 "Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant." What does this verse tell us about God? (He keeps His promises.) Why do you think God wants us to keep our promises? (He wants us to be like Him. He wants us to show love to others like He has shown love toward us.) What is a promise you might make at school this week? Would it be hard or easy to keep that promise? When it is hard to keep a promise, we can ask God to help us."

Give each child an envelope and scissors. Child seals the envelope and cut the envelope in half. Child places index cards inside one of the halves. Child cuts off about 2 inches from the sealed end of the other envelope half. Child slides end piece over the envelope holding the index card and then decorates the holder.

Encourage the children to take the Promise Keeper cards and holder home to place in a prominent place in their room to help remind them to keep their promises.

Craft Learning Activity: “Sun Collage” (Grades K-5)

Preparation: You will need Bibles, a large sheet of paper, permanent markers, 12 X18 inch sheets of construction paper; scissors; a variety of red, yellow, and orange collage materials (tissue paper, fabric scraps, glitter, chenille wires, ribbons, etc.) glue sticks

On a large sheet of paper print “God keeps His Promises and I can too!” From construction paper cut a large sun shape for each child. OR you can cut a poster board into a sun shape to make a pattern. Children can then use the pattern to make their own sun shape.



Procedure: Say: “Today in our lesson God answered Joshua’s prayer to make the sun and moon stand still. God had promised Joshua that he would have victory in the battle. God kept His promise to Joshua by performing several miracles. He caused the soldiers to be confused and flee. He rained hail stones down from heaven to kill the enemy. And He miraculously caused the sun and moon to stand still for 24 hours. We are going to make sun collages to remind us that God keeps promises and we can keep our promises, too!” Give each child a sun shape. Child attaches the collage materials with the glue sticks covering the construction paper star.

As children work lead the children in the following discussion questions: Read 2 Samuel 7:28 “Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.” What does this verse tell us about God? (He keeps His promises.) Why do you think God wants us to keep our promises? (He wants us to be like Him. He wants us to show love to others like He has shown love toward us.) What is a promise you might make at school this week? Would it be hard or easy to keep that promise? When it is hard to keep a promise, we can ask God to help us.”

When the collage is completed, the child uses the permanent marker to copy the words from the large sheet of paper onto the sun shape to make a reminder.

Snack Learning Activity: “Eat a Pita” (Grades K-5)

Purpose: To provide a learning experience that promotes a discussion of situations in which students must make decisions

Preparation: You will need Bibles, pita bread, paper towels, plastic knives, cream cheese, sandwich fillings (sliced cucumbers, bean or alfalfa sprouts, cold cuts, etc.) You can also provide grapes, dates, cheese and pistachios or other nuts for students to sample along with the pita sandwiches. (Be aware of students with food allergies or other medical problems.)



Procedure: Say: “What did the Gibeonites do to trick Joshua and the other leaders into thinking they had come from a far country? (They showed them moldy bread, carried cracked leather bags, and dressed in worn out clothing and sandals.) Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 9:12 “2This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is.”

Distribute the pita bread, paper towels, and plastic knives to students. Place cream cheese and other sandwich fillings in a central location. Students are to place pita bread on their paper towel and use the knives to spread on a thin layer of cream cheese on top or inside the pita bread. Additional fillings can be added as desired.

As students prepare and eat the snack lead a discussion about situations in which we can make decision. See discussion questions above. Remember that making the sandwiches is not an end but

a means for discussion by which you can lead students to discuss decisions they make. Use the time to pray for and with your students.

Optional: Make the sandwiches fun and memorable by adding a few drops of blue and / or green food coloring to the cream cheese and mix with a spoon. Add food coloring as needed to simulate the mold. Students use the “moldy” cream cheese on their sandwiches.

Life Application Challenge: “Wheel of Promise”

Preparation: Print one copy of the Wheel of Promise template below on cardstock one for each child. Each child will need a pencil and paper clip.

Procedure: Demonstrate to students how to use a pencil and a paper clip as a spinner on the “Wheel of Promise.” Ask students to pair up with a partner to play the game.



Students take turns reading the instruction in the space that the spinner points to. Have students collect points each time they do what the instructions say. Have students keep track of their scores on slips of paper. Repeat several times so everyone gets a chance to win.

(You can also make just one wheel and take turns spinning the clip, answering the questions, and having a group discussion.)

Close activity with prayer asking God to help us keep our promises.

Joshua and the Gibeonites



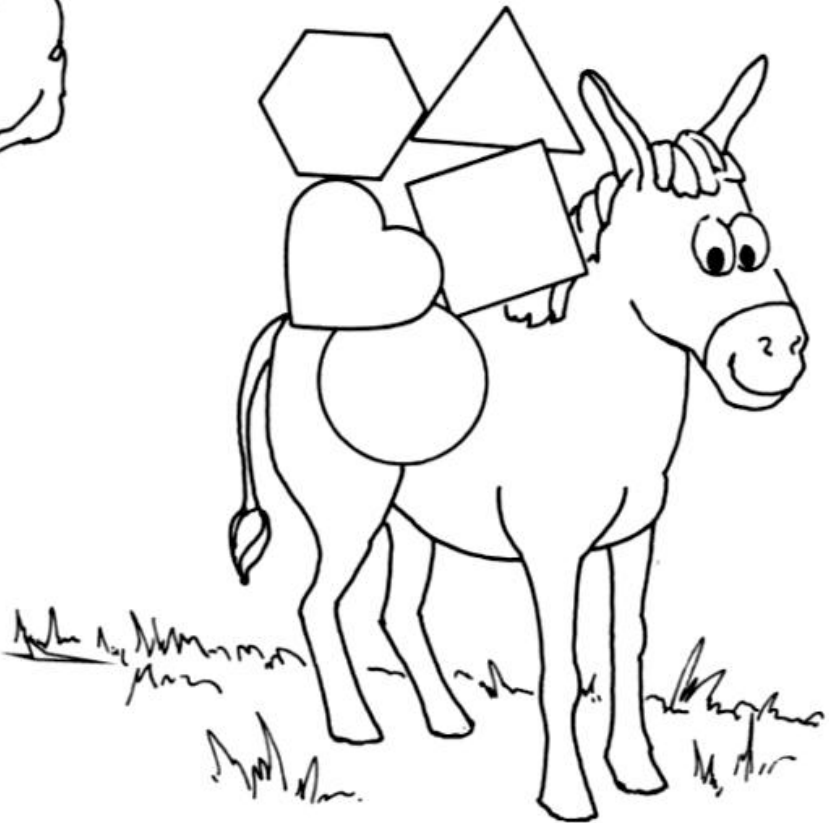
Psalm 17:6

"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me: give ear to me and hear my prayer."

The people of Gibeon were tricky! They wore old clothes and said they were from a far-off country! They loaded the donkeys with worn-out sacks, dry and moldy food and torn wineskins.


Finish the picture.

Connect the shapes that match.



Some kings made war against Gibeon.

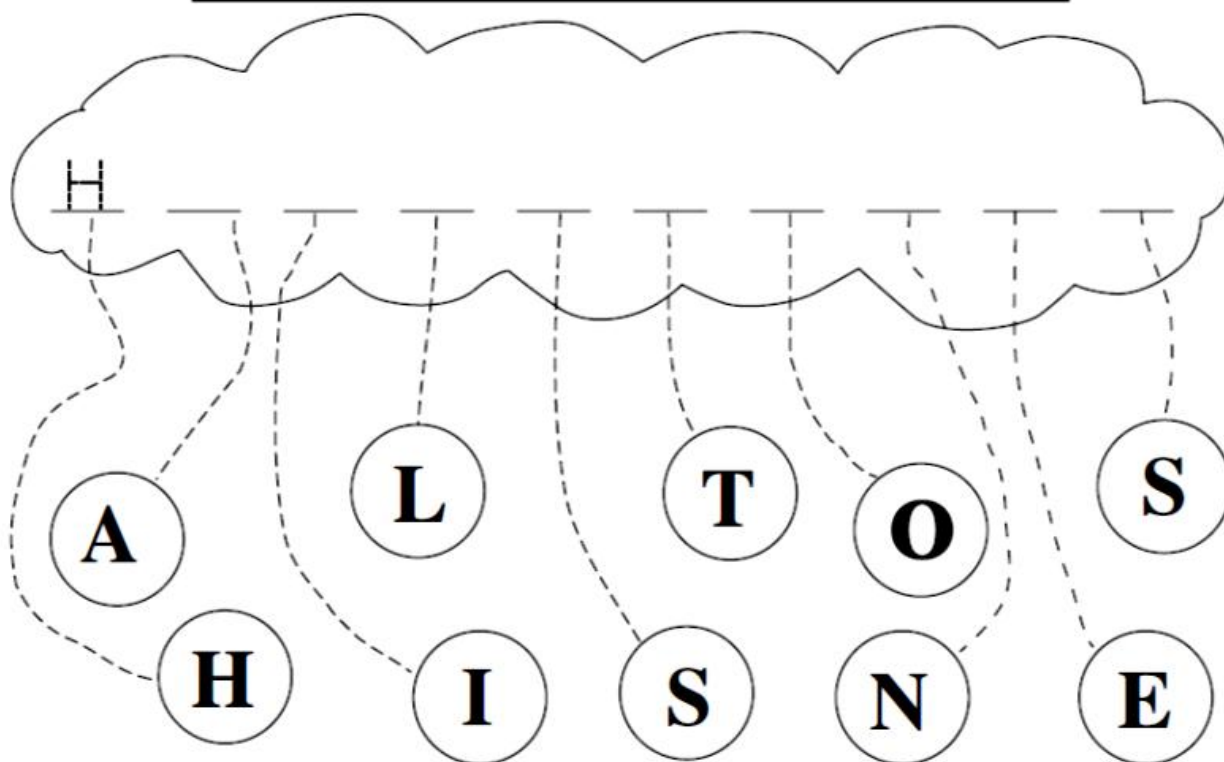
How many kings were there? Count the crowns and circle the number.



1 3 5 7

What did the LORD make fall?

Follow the line from each circled letter. Write the letter on the blank line.



H

A L T O S

H I S N E

The people who came to see Joshua were not from far away! They were from nearby _____.

Use this code to fill in the blanks.

★ = A	⊕ = N
! = B	♣ = O
✕ = C	✱ = P
▷ = D	† = Q
■ = E	▼ = R
☞ = F	⊗ = S
☐ = G	⊖ = T
● = H	× = U
○ = I	♥ = V
▲ = J	→ = W
* = K	☆ = X
✱ = L	✓ = Y
⊕ = M	□ = Z

The visitors said, “ _____

 _____;

 _____.”



The day did not hurry by. It was long enough to defeat the enemy!

Fit the pieces below into the sun to find the words found in Joshua 10:12b.

And

Sun,

still

and

valley

Aijalon.

sun stood

still,

the

the

vengeance

moon stopped,

nation

stand Gibeon,

the

at

Moon, in

of

the

and

until

took

their enemies.

The Day the Sun Stood Still

Read **Joshua 10:1-15**. The Gibeonites asked Joshua for help because five Amorite kings were attacking them. The Lord told Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand." On the day of the battle, Joshua spoke the words below to the Lord. The Lord was listening to Joshua, and as a result of Joshua's words, the sun stopped in the middle of the sky for almost an entire day. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord, and He is listening to you too! What miracle do you need? Speak it in faith and according to His Word!

Use the code to complete the passage. Read aloud what Joshua said to the Lord.

Code



" , s n, st nd st ll

 v r G b n,

 m n, v r th

V ll y f j l n."

Wheel of Promise

1
Tell one way God kept His promise to help Israel win the battle.

2
Tell a reason we can depend on God to keep His promises to us.

1
Yawn!
Tell who saw the longest day in all of history.

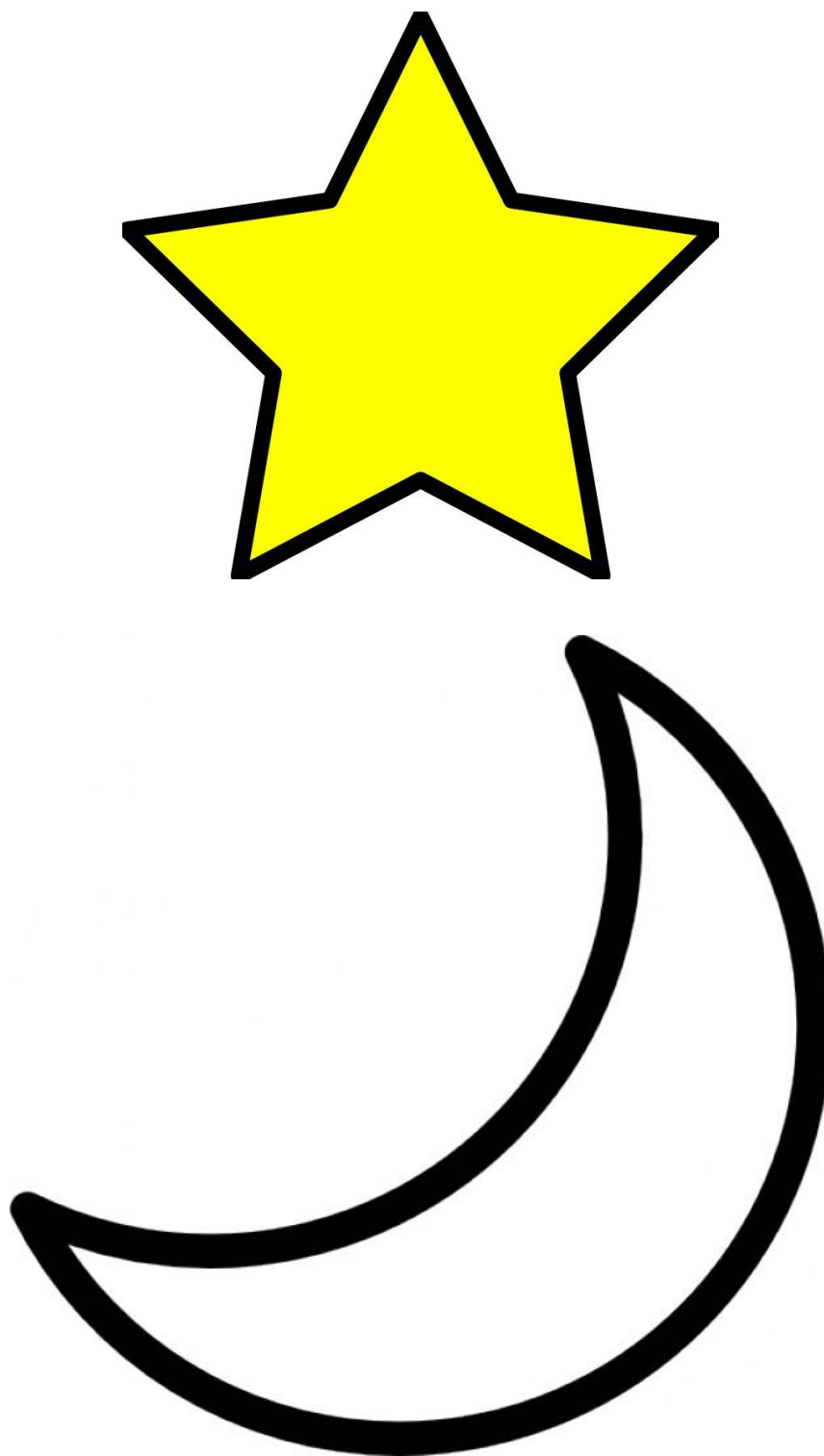
3
You are . . .
Say the words of 2 Samuel 7:28.

4
I promise!
Tell a promise a kid your age could keep.

2
Tell about a time someone kept a promise to you.

3
What very cold way did God help the Israelites?





Eye-glasses

