



October 6, 2019

Snapshot

Crossing the Jordan: The Promised Land

BIG IDEA: God wants us to remember all of the great things He has done for us.

BIBLE BASIS: Joshua 3-4

KEY VERSE: “Remember the wonderful things he has done. Remember his miracles and how he judged our enemies.” Psalm 105:5 (NirV)

 **SCHEDULE**
SMALL GROUP CONNECT 

7–15 minutes

 **LARGE GROUP LESSON**

30–40 minutes

REFLECT AND RESPOND STATIONS

7–15 minutes

 **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**

15–25 minutes

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

The birth of our first child was a huge, exciting, scary, unnerving, and momentous occasion. As with all birthing stories, there is always a “story” behind the story. It is rarely, “Well, I went to the hospital and came home with a baby.” Birthing stories usually involve intimate details, timing of phases, sizes of things, roller-coaster emotions, waiting periods, medical terminology, and many mixed reactions. These details are hard to forget, or so I thought. One of my close friends gave me some motherly advice after our daughter’s birth. She said, “Write down all the details of her birth.” I thought to myself, “Why, I will NEVER forget that!” Well, I forgot. I even made a mistake on her birth announcement. Crazy, right?

I imagine that is what the Israelites felt like after escaping from Egypt, surviving in the desert, and walking through the Jordan River. “Wow! What an amazing story! I will never forget that!” But, unfortunately, they forgot all too quickly. God tried to help the Israelites remember His provisions and promises by having them build a pile of stones. Whenever they looked upon this pile, they were to be reminded of the incredible journey that God had taken them on.

I have to consciously take time in my life to make reminders of God’s promises and provisions. Sadly, it is not something that comes naturally for me. I get so caught up in my “problem of the moment,” that I forget to take the time to look back and remember. As you think about your current “problem of the moment,” take some time to reminisce on times when God has provided for you and answered your prayers. And remind yourself that He is the same God today and loves you just the same.

Mindy Rausch

GO! Team Member



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LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Understanding a Kid's World

One of the best ways to connect with kids is to understand the world they live in. Unfortunately, relying on our memories of being a kid won't cut it. Newsflash: kids don't know who "Captain Caveman" is and your "Speak and Spell" is a technological dinosaur to them. Even if you were a kid just a short while ago, the culture has already shifted considerably. Communicating with kids effectively, whether as a small group leader or a large group teacher, requires you to engage them at *their* level and in *their* world. Don't let the task sound daunting, though—you're surrounded by experts who would be happy to teach you!

Ask the experts: Who's the best person to ask about today's kid culture? (*Warning: obvious answer approaching*) Kids! Ask the kids in your ministry what their favorites are—movies, TV shows, music, board games, video games, apps, toys, etc. Be ready, though. Just like experts in any area, when you get them talking, they might not be able to stop!

Do some research: Who said research has to be boring? Once you know what your kids are watching, playing, and hearing, you should watch it, play it, and listen to it yourself! You'll be surprised how much you learn about kids when you visit their world.

Report your findings immediately: The next time you see the kids, tell them what you listened to, watched, or played. Their faces will most likely light up. You'll be able to reference things that are relevant and interesting to them. Best of all, you'll have an instant connection with them and they'll see you in a whole new light.



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UNIT DESCRIPTION

What kid doesn't love hamming it up in front of a camera from time to time? During the "Snapshot" series, kids will be encouraged to do just that. By striking different fun and creative poses throughout the lessons, kids will help tell the stories of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. More than that, kids will get an unforgettable snapshot of God's enduring love and faithfulness through the deserts of life.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Place a digital camera in the teaching area or make arrangements for the large group teacher to bring a smartphone with photo-taking abilities.
- Place one medium-sized rock in the teaching area.
- Hide 11 more medium-sized rocks in the room. During the Big Bible Story time, kids will be asked to find the hidden rocks. For time sake, don't hide the rocks too hard. Make it so the rocks are at least partially visible from the audience.
- Place a Bible in the teaching area.
- At the very end of large group, kids will make a rock pile to help them remember what God has done in their lives. (See lesson below for details.) You will need to provide one river rock and one marker per kid. Decide ahead of time the best way to distribute the rocks and markers.
- (Optional) Print the "Remembering Rock" template on 8½ x 11 paper and cut apart. Each kid will need one "Remembering Rock." Place the templates in the teaching area along with one marker per kid. This is to be used as a substitute for writing on river rocks.
- Choose which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.

Note: Kids love seeing themselves on the screen. Each week, quickly take snapshots each time the kids strike a pose. As kids arrive the following week, consider showing a slideshow of the snapshots from the previous week.



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★ LARGE GROUP LESSON

CG: “Snapshot” title graphic
Sound: Play upbeat music as kids move to large group area

SNAPSHOT INTRO

Large Group Leader: Hello everybody! I’m so glad you’re here for our very last week of “Snapshot!” *(Hold up camera or smartphone.)* Show me your over-the-top-super-saddest-face ever. *(Take snapshot.)* I know, I know—it’s so sad! But we’ve got one last super-fun “Snapshot” lesson before it’s over. This is your last chance to show me some of your best and craziest poses. Before we get started, though, I think we should stretch out a bit so you don’t pull a muscle while you’re striking a pose. Stand up with me! *(Kids stand.)* Reach as high as you can! *(Pause while kids follow each instruction.)* Twist your shoulders around! And now, most importantly, try to do the splits! *(Let kids attempt the splits.)* Wait—hold it right there! *(Hold up camera or smartphone.)* I’ve got to get a picture of this! *(Count to 3 and take a snapshot. For added fun, take your time. Kids will struggle to hold their pose for too long.)*

You kids are amazing! *(Look at screenshot of picture.)* And now that I have this snapshot, I’ll be able to remember this hilarious moment forever! That’s what snapshots do, isn’t it? They help us remember things. In fact, that’s what we’ve been doing during the “Snapshot” series—we’ve been creating snapshots (or pictures) of the Bible to help us remember how faithful and loving God is. *(Set down camera or smartphone.)*

I’m curious, though. Is there anything else (other than pictures) that you use to help you remember things that happened in the past? *(Take answers.)* Those are some great ideas! But how about this one? *(Hold up a medium-sized stone for kids to see.)* Do any of you ever use rocks to help you remember? *(Kids respond.)* Probably not—but that’s what God had the Israelites use to remember something *really* important. Let’s check out our story for today and see what it was that God wanted them to remember.

CG: “The Big Bible Story” graphic

THE BIG BIBLE STORY—CROSSING THE JORDAN

Time for a snapshot! *(Hold up camera or smartphone.)* Strike a pose like you’re super hot and tired. *(Take a snapshot.)* You might remember from last week that because the Israelites complained and rebelled against God, God made the Israelites wander through the hot, dry desert for 40 whole years. Do you ever ask your parents *(say in whiny voice)* “are we there yet?” when you’re on a long trip? *(Kids respond.)* The Israelites were on the road for 40 years! Can you imagine how many times they must have asked that? More than that, can you imagine how excited they must have been when they finally got to the Promised Land? Let’s do another snapshot.

On the count of three, I want everyone to jump into the air at the same time like you are celebrating or super excited. I’ll try to get a picture while everyone is still in the air! Ready? *(Count to 3. Take a snapshot while kids are in the air.)* Nailed it! *(Have kids take a seat.)* I imagine that’s how the Israelites felt. Oh—except for one thing! Before the Israelites could enter into the Promised Land, they had to cross something. What do you think it was? *(Take answers.)* Great guesses. To get to the Promised Land, the Israelites had to cross the Jordan River. Wait—did I say one thing? There were *two* things. You see—the river didn’t have any bridges. The Israelites would have to cross *through* the water. Wait—did I say two things? There were *three* things. It was flood season, so the river was raging with water. Wait—did I say three things? There were *four* things. Their leader, Moses, grew old and died, so he wasn’t there to help



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them anymore. The Israelites had a new leader named Joshua. Does the name Joshua sound familiar? (*Kids reply.*) In one of our earlier stories, he was one of only two spies who was brave enough to follow God into the Promised Land.

Crossing the Jordan River wasn't going to be easy, but God was with them and He gave Joshua a plan. Time for a snapshot. (*Hold up camera or smartphone.*) Strike a pose like you're lifting something really heavy. (*Take a snapshot.*) God told Joshua to have the priest pick up the Ark of the Covenant and carry it into the Jordan River. (*Do a "time out" symbol with hands.*) Time out! The Ark of the what? **CG: "Ark of the Covenant" Illustration.** The Ark of the Covenant! It was a special box that held the Ten Commandments. It was also a symbol of God's presence—a reminder that God was with them.

Time for a snapshot! Make a face like you're totally shocked. (*Take snapshot.*) The Israelites couldn't believe what they were seeing! As soon as the priest's feet touched the water of the Jordan River, the water stopped flowing. (*Point to one side.*) On one side of them, the river was piling up in a big wall. (*Point to other side.*) On the other side, the river was completely dried up. The people of Israel followed the Ark of the Covenant into the river, but now they were walking on dry ground!

When all the people had crossed, God gave Joshua one more instruction. (*Hold up stone from earlier.*) He told Joshua to choose 12 people—one from each tribe of Israel—to find a stone in the middle of the dried-up river. In fact, that's what I want you to do right now. I've hidden 11 more stones like this around the room. See how quickly you can find them and bring them to me. (*For time sake, when you hide the stones, don't make it too difficult. When kids bring them to you, begin stacking the rocks in the middle of the audience. Tell kids to take a seat around you. Deliver the following lines while stacking the rocks.*)

Once all of the people of Israel had crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant crossed the river, too. As soon as the last priest stepped out of the water, guess what happened? (*Take answer.*) That's right—the water started flowing again. And then God told Joshua to take the stones that the men had picked up and to stack them in a big pile—just like I'm doing. That way, every time the Israelites looked at the pile of stones, they would *remember* how God had stopped the Jordan River and led them into the Promised Land.

CG: "Big Bible Story Questions" graphic

BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids: What was your favorite part of this story? If you saw God hold back the waters of a river, do you think you would ever forget about it? Why or why not? For Older Kids: What does this story teach you about God? Do you think the Israelites would have forgotten about what God did if He didn't have them build a reminder?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area.

CG: "Snapshot" title graphic

REMEMBERING GOD'S WORKS

(*Kneel near the pile of rocks.*) Doesn't it seem kind of weird that God wanted the Israelites to make a big pile of river rocks? Why do you think He had them do that? (*Take answers.*) That's right—God wanted the rocks to be a reminder that He was with them and did amazing things to bring them into the Promised Land. But do you think the Israelites *really* needed a reminder that God had done something as amazing as holding back the waters of the Jordan River? I mean—don't you think they could remember that



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without the help of a pile of rocks? (*Kids respond.*) As hard as it is to imagine, they *did* need help remembering.

(*Move to teaching area.*) Sometimes God does amazing things in our lives—things that make us go (*make a shocked face like the kids did earlier*) like you did earlier in the story. But as time passes, we start to forget. We forget how God has provided for us, how He’s protected us, how He’s guided us through tough situations. And when we forget all the things that God has done for us, we start to think, “Meh—why do I really even need God anyway?” That’s exactly what happened to the Israelites. Even though God had performed so many amazing miracles for them, they kept on forgetting and then they would stop following God. Sometimes they would even follow other gods instead. That’s why the Bible tells us this...let’s look up Psalm 105:5 together. (*Be prepared to give younger kids more time and assistance in finding the verse. When ready, choose a kid to read it aloud or read it aloud yourself while the kids follow along.*)

CG: “Remember the wonderful things he has done. Remember his miracles and how he judged our enemies.” Psalm 105:5

GOD ROCKS!

God probably hasn’t held back the waters of a river for you, but I’ll bet He’s done some pretty cool things in your life. I know He has in mine. (*Share a personal story about something really cool God has done in your life that you need to remember.*) Do you know what’s great about telling stories like that? When you tell stories about the amazing things God has done in your life, it helps you to remember. Maybe God helped you find courage in a scary situation. Maybe God gave you an amazing friend who always sticks by your side. We all have things that God has done for us, and in a little bit, you’ll have a chance to share about those things. But first, we’re going to do what the Israelites did—we’re going to make our own pile of stones to help us remember.

Give each kid one rock. Instruct them to think about something good God has done for them. Pass out markers and let kids write what they thought of on their rock. For younger kids, you might need to help them reduce their answer to a word or two. You can also encourage younger kids to draw a simple picture on the rock. Encourage the kids to work very quietly. When finished, have them add their rocks to the pile in the middle of the room. (Alternative: print out the “Remembering Rock” template from the Resource Folder. Have the kids write or draw their answer on the printout and tape it in a pile formation on the wall.) Tell kids to sit quietly and to say a prayer of thanks to God for all that He has done. When finished, close by praying in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads you. **Music:** (Optional) Play quiet instrumental music.

Next, explain to the kids which of the Reflect and Respond Stations will be available. Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today’s lesson. For more instructions on how the Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide.”

CG: “Snapshot” title graphic



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REFLECT AND RESPOND STATIONS

Prayer Station prompt: Write a prayer to God thanking Him for what He has done in your life.

Journal Station prompt: Make a list of all the good things God has done for you.

Bible Station prompt: Read it for yourself: Joshua 3-4. Write to God your favorite part of the story. Tell Him why you liked it.

Art Station prompt: Draw a picture of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River on dry ground. Write the words, "I will remember" beneath your picture.

