

# Remembering God's Works

Session 3 • Joshua 3:14–4:9



## ENGAGE

**PREPARE:** Display **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Conquest of Canaan*). Make copies of **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: The Life of Joshua*) and **Pack Item 11** (*Handout: Memorial Stones*).

**ASK:** What are some prominent memorials you can think of? Why are they significant, and what impact do they have on people today? (p. 29)

**READ:** Direct a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 29. Affirm that the purpose of monuments is to remind us of what has happened in our past and to challenge us to look ahead to the future. Explain that today's session focuses on how Israel memorialized God's mighty works on their behalf as they set foot in the promised land.

**CONTEXT:** Summarize the miracle God provided for the people as they crossed the Jordan River:

- “At that time of year, the Jordan’s banks were overflowing. Nevertheless, when the priests stepped into the water, the waters receded, making a dry path for all of Israel to cross (3:6-17; 4:23). When every Israelite had completed crossing the Jordan, the Lord commanded Joshua to choose twelve men, one from each

tribe, to each take a stone from the riverbed.” (p. 29)

**LOCATE:** Direct attention to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: The Conquest of Canaan*). Highlight Gilgal on the map and share that this is where the men took the stones from the river. Point out that God commanded Joshua to use those stones to build a memorial at Gilgal.

**TRANSITION:** *We will dig deeper into these events in this session.*

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

**REVIEW:** Distribute copies of **Pack Item 10** (*Handout: The Life of Joshua*). Review Joshua's role in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Note that God called him to lead Israel in Joshua 1 and now we pick up on his first steps in leading the people across the Jordan River and into the promised land.

**READ:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Joshua 3:14-17** as the group listens for the specific details to set up the crossing.

**RECAP:** Stress the significance of the timing of this river crossing:

- **(3:15)** *The comment that “the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season” enhances the miracle that follows. According to Jewish calendars,*

*the crossing took place in the month of Abib or Nisan, which roughly corresponds to March and April on our calendar. The Lord had established Nisan as the first month of the Israelites' spiritual year when He established Passover (Ex. 12:1-2). This was also harvest season, a time when the Jordan River normally exceeded its flood stage.*

**REFLECT:** On the board, write: *Nothing is impossible with God.* Discuss this phrase and its significance in these verses. Briefly compare this miracle to the Red Sea.

- **(3:14-17)** Similarities exist between the previous generation's crossing of the Red Sea and this generation's crossing of the Jordan. In both events the Lord miraculously separated waters and allowed His people to cross on dry ground. In both instances the waters "heaped up" (Ex. 15:8; "rising up in a mass," Josh. 3:16), as God's people overcame a tremendous obstacle. And the primary purpose of each crossing was to bring glory to God and to affirm the man God had chosen to lead Israel (Ex. 14:31; Josh. 3:7-13).



### **Acts of God**

Learn more about the powerful acts of God experienced by the Israelites in the books of Joshua and Judges.

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**ASK: Why are barriers an important part of our spiritual journey?** (p. 31) Discuss how the Jordan River presented a barrier to Israel reaching the promised land.

**DISCUSS:** Encourage adults to share if they have run a marathon or half marathon. Lead a brief discussion on the significance of mile markers and way points, especially to help people keep going.

**READ: Call for a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 4:1-7,** directing the group to listen for the marker God established.

**EXAMINE:** Distribute copies of **Pack Item 11** (*Handout: Memorial Stones*). Allow adults time to scan the article. Lead a brief discussion of the significance of the markers. Emphasize the purpose of God's commands in these verses:

- **(4:6-7)** *The stones served as "a sign" for the current generation and their descendants. The Hebrew term for sign can signify an unusual event. These particular stones would direct people back to God's miraculous work in that spot. The Lord intended these stones to elicit questions about spiritual matters. They also were "a memorial." The Hebrew term is derived from "to remember." They functioned as a visual reminder of the dramatic way the Lord had helped His people. By reminding Israel of God's work, the stones pointed future generations toward a deeper faith in Him.*

**ASK: What are some milestones that could remind people of God's work in their lives?** (p. 31)

**TRANSITION:** *After the people had crossed over the river on dry ground and collected the stones, it was time to build the monument.*

**READ: Call for the group to read silently Joshua 4:8-9**, looking for how many monuments were built and where.

**EXPLAIN:** Encourage adults to share physical monuments or markers they may currently have around their home. Allow volunteers to share about their items and why they are significant. Lead the group to review the information about the monument set up in verse 8.

**DISCUSS:** Read verse 9 aloud again. Lead a brief discussion on why it would be important for the Israelites to know the monument was still there. Talk about how events in our lives as believers can serve as “memorials” to God’s work in our lives.

**ASK: How can previous experiences with God strengthen a person’s faith? How can we pass on our faith stories to future generations?** (p. 31) Record suggestions about sharing with future generations on the board or a large sheet of paper. Emphasize the importance of recounting our personal faith stories for our children and grandchildren.

**PRAY:** Thank God for His activity in the lives of His people, asking Him to help each adult remember how much He does for them.

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## CHALLENGE

**SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from this week’s Bible passage:

- We can be sure that God never fails to provide perfectly for His people during their time of need.

- We should establish memorials in our lives that consistently remind us of God’s work on our behalf.
- God expects believers to remember and testify to what He has done for them.

**REVIEW:** Discuss the importance of spiritual memorials in our lives and how we can use them to reflect upon God’s work in our lives. Encourage adults to respond to the **Apply the Text** activity on page 31. Remind them that the focus should remain on giving God the glory for what He has done. Urge them to share His works with someone else during the week ahead.

**PRAY:** Close in prayer, thanking God for His faithful work in the lives of believers and asking Him to remind each individual of His work in their lives and the lives of those around them.

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## AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by texting or emailing the group. Share a photo of one of your spiritual markers or memorials. Describe what it is and why it is significant. Encourage adults to share their own photos in the group message. Remind the group of the importance God places on remembering His work and sharing that work with others.