



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Joshua 2:1-24

1 John 5:2-4

Session Theme:

Loyalty

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Seeing Red!

Bring a red ribbon or cloth to class with you. Wave it in front of the kids, and ask what seeing it brings to mind for them. (*Bullfighting? A scarf? A Christmas bow?*)

Ask kids if they have ever tied a ribbon to a suitcase so they could easily identify it as theirs while it's on an airport baggage carousel. Explain that people sometimes do things like that to signal something — not to themselves, but to others. That's what happened in today's Bible story. But why? Let's begin our lesson to find out!

Have you ever made a promise to someone? Did you keep it? In today's story, we will learn about some people who did just that, and the role that a red cord played in the whole event. Let's begin our lesson and hear more!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, you have been faithful to your people throughout the generations. Help us to be loyal to you, and to trust you in all circumstances. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "Great is Thy Faithfulness" (hymn)
- "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho" (spiritual)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Conquest

Joshua led the people into the Promised Land and captured the cities of the Canaanites. God led the people to many miraculous victories, including the battle of Jericho.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Joshua 2:1-24

1. Israel officially entered the Promised Land when the people crossed the Jordan River. How can following God's lead in your life be both exciting and scary at the same time? Can you give an example?

After the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had been too fearful to enter the Promised Land, thinking they would be beaten by the Canaanites. That is why God made that generation wander in the wilderness 40 years. We, too, are often fearful of change and transition, worried about the challenges we will face and what we might lose in the process. But God promises to be with us, and he is always at work opening up new possibilities — even ones we don't expect.

2. Why did Joshua send two men as spies into Jericho? What were they sent there to do? Do you think they expected to find help when they got there?

The two men were sent as spies to get a sense for the layout of the town and its defenses. They would have been looking for weaknesses to exploit and for potential allies (as Rahab turned out to be). They had no reason to expect help, but God provided assistance to them. They hid in the house of Rahab, where no one in town would be suspicious of their presence. Rahab was known for having male "guests" at her house.

3. Where did Rahab get the idea that these men were on God's side? What had she heard about them and their God?

Clearly news of the Lord's power and might had gone ahead of the Israelites. People heard what God had done for his people in Egypt — just as God had intended when he was doing it. Rahab had heard about God parting the Red Sea, and the defeat of all the enemies that stood in Israel's way. She had also heard it was said that "the Lord has given you the land."

4. What did Rahab ask the men to do in exchange for hiding them? Did they agree to her request? In what sense was this mutual promise a saving covenant? For what did they need to depend on one another?

Rahab asked that her family be spared from

death when the Israelites captured the city. If they promised, she vowed to keep quiet about them. In a biblical sense, this was a "covenant" (a contractual agreement between two parties). As in our relationship with God, such a promise requires each party depend on the trust of those involved.

4. How did the two spies escape from Jericho? What did Rahab do to show the Israelite armies that she was on their side? How did that protect her and her family?

Since Rahab's house was built into the city wall, she was able to let them down by rope. (In those days, back-to-back buildings served as perimeter barriers for cities. Doors were only on the inside.) The rope that she left hanging was scarlet (bright red), so it would be easily recognized.

5. In the Bible, the color red (scarlet) often brings to mind the image of blood. In what sense does the blood of Jesus mark us as his own and spare us from the wrath of God?

Allusions to other Bible stories can be seen in this story. For example, the Israelites marked their houses in Egypt with the blood of lambs, so that the Lord passed over their homes in the last plague. As Christians, we are marked by the blood of Jesus. As Paul says in Romans 5:9, "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."

Revelation 5:9 says, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation ..."

6. Read Mark 4:21-25. What is Jesus telling us here about the need to be bold and courageous? How is it that the things we do, good or bad, have a way of coming back around to us?

The light of Jesus shines in us by faith; Jesus wants us to show that light to others. The spies were brave enough to enter a city of unbelievers, but Rahab was also brave enough to put a sign of her promise on display. This willingness to risk benefited both parties, as Rahab's mercy came full circle.

7. Even though the spies had to enter enemy territory, God was with them, preparing the way. Why is it important to remember that God goes before us?

The phrase "the Lord goes before you ..." is a common biblical way of expressing confidence that God will be with us wherever he leads (see also Deuteronomy 31:3, Isaiah 45:2, Mark 14:28). We are never apart from the love and saving power of Jesus.

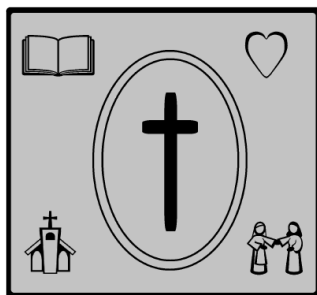
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Loyalty Cloth Craft

Materials Needed:

- Plain bandannas (ideally red, but white will do. Available at craft stores)
- Fabric markers
- *Alternative supplies:*
Red paper and markers



Instructions:

Give each kid a red or white bandanna and fabric markers (or if those supplies are not available, a red piece of paper and regular markers).

Remind the class how Rahab in today's story tied a red cord to her window. Why did she do that? *(She was reminding the scouts that she had been loyal to them and their God, and calling upon them to remember their promise to be loyal to her and her family.)*



Invite kids to design their own red cloth. To whom are *they* loyal? To God? To their families? To certain friends? Draw symbols or small pictures representing each of these things. Put the cross symbol in the center of the cloth because our allegiance to God comes first, with all

other loyalties flowing out of that.

If using paper instead of cloth, crumple the paper after drawing on it; then smooth it out again to look like wrinkled cloth.

Rahab had to trust that the scouts would honor their promise and be as loyal to her as she had been to them. This was probably a little scary, especially when her city was under attack! But in the end, the scouts kept their word and Rahab was safe.

People are imperfect, and because of this, they can fail each other at times. God, on the other hand, is completely loyal and trustworthy. Put your faith in him! Even when people disappoint, God will never forget his promises to you.

Activity 2: Tug of War Game

Materials Needed:

- Large open space to play an active game
- Red ribbon, small cloth or piece of red yarn
- Two small white ribbons or pieces of white yarn
- Long rope or sheet
- Another rope or piece of yarn to be a center line



Instructions:

Before playing this game: Tie the red ribbon (or piece of cloth or yarn) in the center of the long rope (or sheet). Several feet on each side of the red ribbon, tie a white ribbon.

Mark a center line on the ground with a second rope or a piece of yarn. (If playing inside, you can use masking tape for the center line instead.) Set the tug of war rope on top of that, perpendicular to the center line. Be sure the red ribbon is located right on the center line so both sides of the rope are even.

To play the game: Divide the kids into two teams. Have the kids count off by twos — everyone who is a “1” will be on one team, and everyone who is a “2” will be on the other team. Invite each team to stand on opposite sides of the center line.

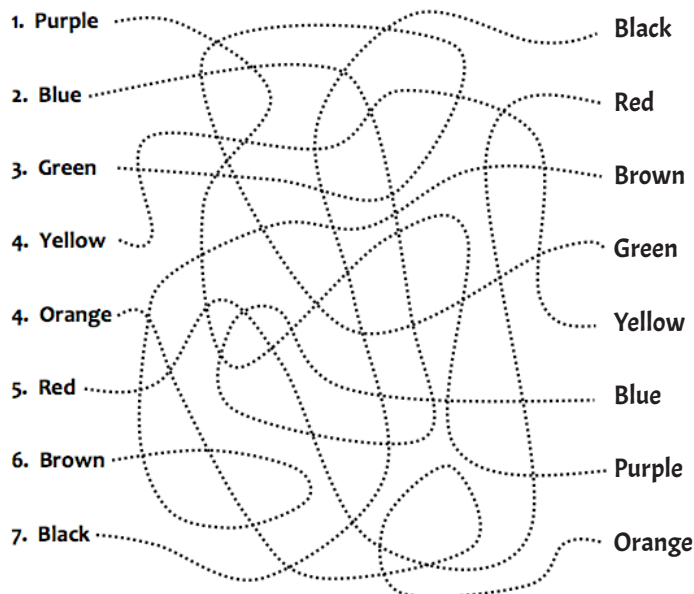
Invite teams to pick up the rope. On your command, both teams will start pulling the rope backwards in the hopes of tugging the other team across the center line. Once the white mark on the rope has crossed the center line, the team that pulled the other across can be declared the winner.

In today's Bible story, Rahab helped the scouts escape from her building with a long rope. Later, she tied a red cloth outside so they would remember and save her.

Tug of War is based on strength, not loyalty. However, it can remind us that in life, there are always forces pulling us in one direction or the other. To whom, and to what, will we be loyal?

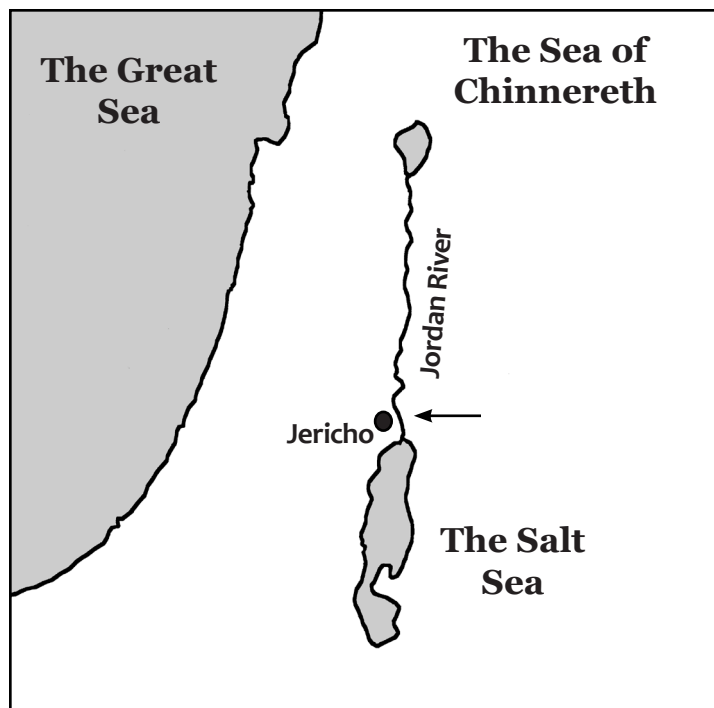
Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below is the solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Map Answer Key

The place where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land was at the south end (the downstream end) near the Salt Sea.



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Loyalty

Being devoted to a person or to a cause

The scouts showed loyalty to Rahab by keeping her safe when her city was attacked.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Loyalty is one of the greatest character traits we can possess. To be loyal is to be devoted to another so that they can trust that you will never turn your back on them.

Who do you know that exhibits loyalty toward you?

Our culture struggles mightily with the trait of loyalty. We see it on social media where people tear one another down; we experience it at school where kids we thought were friends turn away from us, hurt our feelings, and even abandon the friendship. But when we find that friend who is trustworthy and true to us, there is someone to hang on to!



Rahab was a good friend to the Israelites as they were crossing over into the Promised Land. They had to fight against enemy armies in order to get their land, and she devoted herself to helping them. This was a great risk for her! If she had been caught being disloyal to her people while she was being loyal to Israel, it would have been big trouble for her.

Talk about the importance of loyalty in relationships. What have you learned about it from experience?

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer praising God for his loyalty to you. Thank him for giving you loyal friends and family who always have your back. Ask him to help you to be loyal as well.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.