



Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve

(based on Joshua 24:14–28)

God had promised to care for the Hebrew people, but they didn't trust God's promise. God decided to let the people wander as they walked to their new homeland. They walked. And walked. And walked. For forty years, they walked.

When Moses died, Joshua, one of the spies who had trusted God, became the leader of the Hebrew people. Joshua stopped the people at the Jordan River. On the other side, they could see the promised land. Joshua trusted God to take care of the people. As Joshua led the people into the river, it parted. The people and the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant crossed safely to the other side.

Joshua called everyone together. He reminded the people about God's faithfulness throughout the years. Now God had brought them to a new home with cities, houses, gardens, food, and animals, just as God had promised. Joshua knew that it wouldn't be easy to live in the new land.

Other people already lived there, and they worshiped other gods. Joshua knew the Hebrew people would be tempted to follow the gods of the people living in the land.

Joshua challenged the people: "Love God. Worship and serve only God. Today, and every day, you have a choice to make. You can follow other gods, or you can love and worship the God who has been faithful to you. As for my family and me, we will serve God."

The people whooped and cheered! "Yes! We will serve God too!"

Joshua cautioned them. "It may not always be easy," he said. "God will not be happy if you turn away."

The people exclaimed, "We will serve God, who has been with us all along!"

God's people made a promise that day, a promise to love and serve God. Joshua wrote this promise in the book of God's law. He set a large stone in place for all to see and remember their choice to love and serve God.



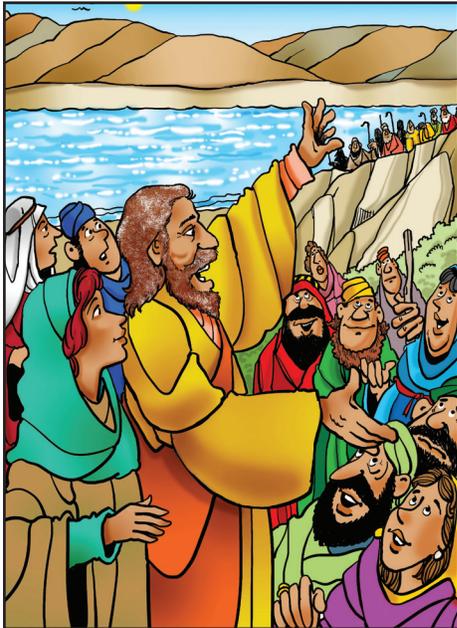
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- We make choices every day in our lives. Together, examine some big choices and some little choices you have made this week. How did your choices love and serve God?
- Watch the YouTube video “God’s Story: Joshua Becomes Leader” (bit.ly/JoshuaVideo). This is a recap of the stories from the Hebrew people’s slavery in Egypt, to the exodus, and sending spies into Canaan. The video ends where today’s story starts, with Joshua leading the people into the promised land. Together, tell the story of what happens next. Make a storyboard of the scenes.



Responding to God's Grace

- The Hebrew people had to wander for forty years before they could enter the promised land. Go for a long walk.
- Make a reminder to love and serve God each day. Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. Trace a hand with the tip of the thumb and the tip of the pointer finger on the fold, making half a heart. Cut out the hand and open it to reveal serving hands forming a heart for God.
- Read a book such as *The Story Book Knight* by Helen Docherty and Thomas Docherty, *Crouching Tiger* by Ying Chang Compestine, and *I'll Follow the Moon* by Stephanie Lisa Tara. Talk about the choices made in these books that are like the choice the Hebrew people made to love and serve God alone.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Make a house picture that says, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” You could use a photo of your house, draw a picture, or make a house from craft sticks (see bit.ly/CraftStickHouse). Place the picture inside the door you frequently go in and out of each day to remind you to love and serve God.
- Watch and sing along to the YouTube video “Joshua 24 15b” (bit.ly/Joshua24Song). The tune and lyrics repeat. Add variations such as motions, dance moves, rhythm instruments, and so forth.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Dear God, every day may we choose to love and serve you. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.