



What Do the Stones Mean?

(based on Joshua 3; 4:1-8, 19-24)

Finally! After the long journey through the wilderness, it was time for the Hebrew people to enter the land that God had promised them. Everyone was excited. The people couldn't wait to see their new home.

There was one problem, though. The people walked right up to the Jordan River and stopped. The Hebrew people had walked and walked to reach the Promised Land, only to be stopped by a river.

The people cried out, "There's no way to cross."

Still others complained. "If only Moses were with us still."

The people remembered how Moses had stretched out his staff and the sea parted so they could get across. But Moses had died.

God had appointed a new leader named Joshua.

Joshua, walking among the crowd, said, "Camp here for the night. Pray and prepare. In the morning, God will do wonders."

Joshua was confident in God's grace.

The people camped. In the morning, Joshua told them to follow the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan River. The ark was a very special box that reminded the people that God was always with them. The priests went ahead of the people, carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

The priests came to the river and walked in. Just as the priests' feet touched the rushing water, the river stopped. The priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the river, and all the people walked across on dry land! It was incredible!

Joshua called twelve people to go back and pick up a large stone from the middle of the river.

When twelve stones had been collected, the priests carrying the ark came out of the river. There was a big splash! The water started flowing again.

Joshua instructed the people to pile the huge stones high so they could be seen for miles around. "These are our remembering stones," Joshua said.

"Whenever our children ask about the stones, say, 'These are our memory stones' and tell the children the story of all God has done."

So whenever the children asked about the stones, someone would say, "These are our memory stones," and the people would remember that they belonged to a God of grace.



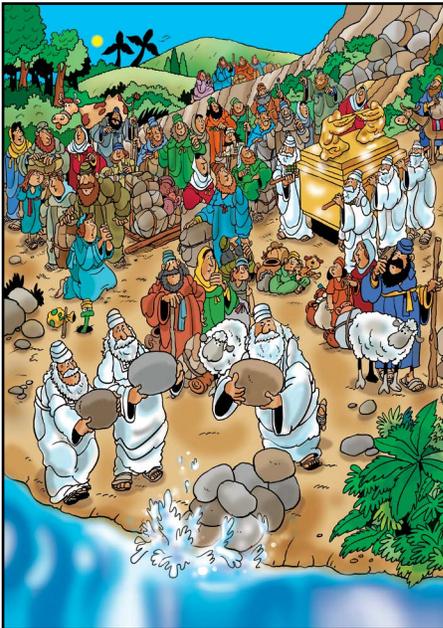
What Do the Stones Mean?

(based on Joshua 3:14-17; 4:1-8, 19-24)

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.
- Though the Israelites may have believed that God lived in the Ark, they did not believe that the Ark was God, nor would they have considered worshiping the Ark. Children may need help in making this distinction.
- Think of a time when you faced a difficult or scary situation. Who might you go to for help? How might you lead someone the way Joshua led the people?
- Draw a picture or write about a time when you crossed a river. How do you think the Israelites felt when they crossed the Jordan River with Joshua?



Responding to God's Grace

- What symbols remind us that God is with us? The Ark of the Covenant was a symbol that reminded the Israelite people that God was with them. Tour your church and look for symbols that remind us that God loves and cares for us.
- Provide a quiet space and a journal or pieces of paper, pencils, and crayons or markers. Write letters or draw pictures that thank God for the reminders we have of God. Brainstorm some ways God helps us. Include the ideas in the letter or picture.
- Talk about memorials or historic sites or monuments you have visited.
- Take a nature walk. Point out things that remind you of God. Use all of the senses. What do you see, hear, smell, touch, and, if possible, taste? What stories about God do these things remind you of?

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Fill in the blanks in the prayer below to create your own memory prayer of thanks to God:
 Loving God, whenever I see _____,
 I remember you, and I feel _____.
 I think of all the good things you do, especially _____.
 Thank you for _____.
 Help me to share the good news of your love with _____.
 Amen.
- Pray this way during the week:
Dear God, thank you for reminders that help us think of you. Thank you for the stories that teach us about you. Help us to share your stories with others. Amen.