



THE COVENANT CONTINUES

Daily Bible Readings			
M	Aug. 31	Rom. 8:31–39	More Than Victorious
T	Sept. 1	Gen. 13:14–18	See What God Has Promised
W	Sept. 2	Deut. 34:1–12	The Promised Land Revealed
Th	Sept. 3	Heb. 4:1–10	God’s Promised Rest
F	Sept. 4	Heb. 10:14–18	God’s New Covenant
Sa	Sept. 5	Ps. 27	Whom Shall I Fear?

BIBLICAL SUMMARY

God commissioned Joshua to assume leadership of Israel as successor to Moses, instructing him to be strong, courageous, and obedient to the law, and in return, God would be with Joshua, granting him success in conquest.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1

A VERSE TO REMEMBER

[The LORD said,] “I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” (Josh. 1:9)

PREPARING TO LEAD

- Pray for participants and for yourself as leader. Reflect on lesson 1, “The Covenant Continues” (Participant’s Book, p. 1).
- Familiarize yourself with the context of the Scripture.
- Provide Bibles, Participant’s Books, Worship Leaflets for lesson 1, name tags, paper, index cards, pens, newsprint, and markers. Obtain modeling clay. Obtain copies of hymnals.
- Obtain a white pillar candle, as well as a means to light it.
- Steps 3–6 include a variety of lesson activity options; within each step, select activities that appeal to participants.

LEADING THE LESSON

Opening Worship

1. Gathering

- Greet participants and provide name tags. Invite participants to recall an incident in which they summoned up courage. Discuss how courage helped them in the incident. What was the source of their courage?
- Distribute Bibles, Participant's Books, and Worship Leaflets for lesson 1.
- Formulate and get consensus on some simple ground rules for the study (for example, welcoming diverse points of view, maintaining confidentiality, and so on).

2. Morning Prayer 1

Worship Leaflet, lesson 1

- Light the white candle, noting that it is a tangible reminder of the presence of the risen Christ.
- Encourage participants to settle into silence.
- Invite volunteers to lead portions of Morning Prayer from the Worship Leaflet, beginning with the Opening Sentences and ending after the Hymn.

Teaching Proposition and Teaching Points
<p>God provides for God's people by developing leaders to guide them so that they may live faithfully in covenant with God.</p> <p>God calls all kinds of people to be leaders. Moses and Joshua are two examples, but God also calls children (Samuel and Jeremiah). Age is not what is most important to God; being strong, courageous, and faithful is important to God.</p> <p>Even though Moses was very hesitant at first to take on the leadership role God asked of him, Joshua stepped into the leadership role where God called him.</p> <p>Joshua learned from Moses and had the confidence to say "yes" immediately.</p> <p>God gave Joshua instructions so he could be confident to take his army into battle.</p> <p>Even though we may not lead armies, God continues to give us instructions on how to be faithful in our everyday lives and calls us to be strong and courageous.</p>

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1:1–11

1:1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’s assistant, saying, ²“My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. ³Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. ⁵No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶Be strong and courageous, for you shall lead this people to possess the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. ⁹I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

¹⁰Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, ¹¹“Pass through the camp and command the people, ‘Prepare your provisions, for in three days you are to cross over this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.’”

Note: Find Scripture Notes for this reading on the final page of the lesson.

Bible Study

3. Scripture Reading

Participant’s Book, p. 2

- Display a sheet of newsprint and provide markers.
 1. Invite volunteers to read God’s covenant with God’s people: Genesis 17:1–8; Genesis 26:2–5; and Genesis 28:13–15. Record on newsprint God’s promises made in each covenant.
 2. Have volunteers read aloud the requirements for the people to keep the covenant: Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 6:4–9. Record the requirements on the newsprint.
 3. Read Joshua 1:1–11. Identify how God fulfills God’s part of the covenant in this passage. Discuss how the people are expected to live into their part of the covenant.
- Option: Distribute paper and pens. Read Joshua 1:1–11. Invite each participant to write or draw, describing or sketching an image of Joshua as a leader, using the description of God’s call to leadership in the passage. Encourage volunteers to share the characteristics they noted in their description or sketch.

- Option: Encourage participants to imagine that they are one of the Israelites who has journeyed through the desert with Moses. Read Joshua 1:1–11. Distribute paper and pens. Have them write a journal entry about how they feel after Moses’s death and what kind of comfort they need. Invite volunteers to share what they wrote.

4. **God’s Continuing Faithfulness** Participant’s Book, p. 3

- Form pairs and assign each a set of Scripture passages to compare Joshua’s leadership to that of Moses: Joshua 3:1–17 to Exodus 14:21–25; Joshua 5:10–11 to Exodus 13:3–10; Joshua 5:15 to Exodus 3:5; Joshua 7:7–9 to Numbers 14:13–19; Joshua 13:8–32 to Deuteronomy 3:8–22. Have each pair report their comparison to the group. Discuss their impressions of the leadership of these two men.
- Discuss how God responds to the people’s loss. How does God calling Joshua to leadership help or not help the people deal with the death of Moses and the journey they are facing? How else does God provide for the people in Joshua 1?
- Discuss this question from the Participant’s Book: How has the story of God’s relationship with God’s people as told in Scripture sustained you through the changes of your life?

5. **Courage That Comes from God’s Faithfulness** Participant’s Book, p. 4

- Challenge participants to identify examples from Scripture that demonstrate God’s steadfast presence with God’s people. Using modeling clay, have them create images to depict what God’s steadfast presence looks like.
- Distribute hymnals and locate the hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Explore the lyrics and discuss how people find comfort or courage in God as a fortress. Identify other images of God that participants rely on for comfort or courage.
- Invite the group to come up with a definition of *courage*. Discuss how God’s presence in our lives helps us to be courageous. When has knowing that God is faithful given you courage? What do you learn about God when you overcome challenges with courage?

6. **Stepping into the World** Participant’s Book, p. 5

- Distribute paper and pens. In teams, list people who demonstrate courage and strength. Gather the teams to compare lists. Continue discussion with these questions:
 1. What does courage and strength look like in our world?
 2. What do these look like to God?

- Invite the group to list qualities in a leader that would be helpful based on the situation that the Israelites were facing. Rank these qualities in order of importance to the situation faced by the Israelites. Continue discussion with these questions:
 1. How are these qualities or the ranking of these qualities similar to or different from the qualities we look for in a leader today?
 2. How does your faith community discern those whom God calls to leadership?
- Explain that God calls all kinds of people to be leaders: Moses and Joshua, Samuel and Jeremiah. Age is not what is most important to God; being strong, courageous, and faithful is important to God.
 1. Identify leaders in your congregation/community.
 2. In what ways do each of these leaders show strength, courage, and faithfulness?
 3. How might God's strength and courage encourage your leadership in your congregation or community?
- Distribute index cards and pens. Have each participant write on their card one way God has provided for them in the past week and one way they can be faithful to God in the upcoming week. Invite volunteers to share. Challenge them to look for ways that God gives them courage and strength to be faithful.

Closing Worship

7. Morning Prayer 2

Worship Leaflet, lesson 1

- Invite the participants to turn to the Worship Leaflet, and enlist volunteers to lead remaining portions of Morning Prayer.
- Begin with the Prayer, pray the Lord's Prayer, and end with the Dismissal.
- Bless and challenge participants as they leave, saying, "*(Name)*, be strong and courageous for God is with you wherever you go."
- Extinguish the candle.

SCRIPTURE NOTES

The following notes from the Uniform Series provide additional information about today's Scripture.

1. The book of Joshua is named for the main character in the historical events that unfold in the book. Joshua is not the author of the book. Joshua picks up where Moses left off, leading Israel to the Promised Land.
2. Joshua's leadership is described throughout the book by many comparisons to Moses.

3. Deuteronomy lays out God’s instructions for inhabiting the Promised Land, which is part of the covenant established while Israel was still in the wilderness under Moses’s leadership. Joshua and Judges narrate how the Israelites enter and inhabit the land.
4. The book of Joshua is an interpretation of past events, and the author is concerned to understand that period of Israel’s history in the context of God’s covenantal instructions with a view to inspiring the present and future faithfulness of his audience.

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS DURING THE WEEK

Send an email or a text:

1. Encouraging them to recall a time when they have been invited or called to take on a leadership role. What courage and strength from God did they rely on in that role?
2. Inviting them to use Google Maps to find monuments in your city or state. What is the purpose of these monuments? How do the stories about these monuments get passed on in the community?