Preschool–Grade 6

As for Me and My House

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Serving God is a choice we make, with a true heart, and we can make it today.
Bible passage: Joshua 24:14–28 (with 24:1–13 as background). Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." *Joshua 24:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: This or That (5–10 minutes)

Read each pair. Kids stand up for the first choice and stay seated for the second. 1) Pizza or tacos? 2) Summer or winter? 3) Read a book or play outside? 4) Tell the truth when it's hard, or hide it? 5) Help at home without being asked, or wait until someone asks? Ask: *Which choices were easy? Which ones matter most? Does anyone else make your choices for you?* Say: "Today we'll hear Joshua ask a whole nation to make the biggest choice of all."

2. Bible story: Choose You This Day (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Joshua 24. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

All the tribes at Shechem. Look up Joshua 24:1. Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to **Shechem** *(SHEK-em)*, with their elders, heads, judges and officers, and they presented themselves before God. Joshua told them what God said He had done (24:2–13): He took Abraham and led him through the land of Canaan, sent Moses and Aaron, brought them out of Egypt, put darkness between them and the Egyptians at the Red sea, and led them into the land. **Look up Joshua 24:13.** God gave them a land they did not **labour** (work) for, cities they built not, and vineyards and oliveyards they planted not.

Serve Him with a true heart. Look up Joshua 24:14. To **fear the LORD** means to honor Him as God. **Sincerity** means really meaning it, with no pretending. Joshua told them to put away the gods their fathers served "on the other side of the flood." In this verse **the flood** means the big river where Abraham's family lived long ago (24:2–3), and the **gods** were false gods that people served instead of the LORD.

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Choose. Look up Joshua 24:15. "If it seem evil unto you" means "if you don't want to." Joshua said, "choose you this day whom ye will serve." Then he made his own choice first: "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." **My house** means his whole family, everyone in his home.

The people answer. Look up Joshua 24:16. "God forbid" means "Never! No way!" **Forsake** means leave or turn away from. They remembered that God brought them out of Egypt and **preserved** them, kept them safe, all the way (24:17). "Therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God" (24:18). Joshua warned them that serving God is serious, and they answered, "Nay; but we will serve the LORD" (24:19–21). **Look up Joshua 24:22.** A **witness** is someone who saw and heard, and can tell what happened. The people said, "We are witnesses." Joshua told them to **incline your heart**, turn your heart, to the LORD (24:23). **Look up Joshua 24:24.**

The great stone. That day Joshua made a **covenant** with the people, a solemn promise with God, and set them a **statute and an ordinance**, which means rules to live by (24:25). **Look up Joshua 24:26.** Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and set up a great stone under an oak, by the sanctuary of the LORD. **Look up Joshua 24:27.** The stone "hath heard all the words of the LORD," so it would be a witness. Then every man went home to his **inheritance**, the land God gave his family (24:28). And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua (24:31).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Before Joshua asked the people to choose, he reminded them of everything God had done (Joshua 24:2–13). Why do you think he did that first?
2. Joshua said "as for me" before he said "my house" (24:15). Why does it matter that he made his own choice first?
3. What does it mean to serve God "in sincerity and in truth" (24:14)? What would pretending to serve God look like?
4. The stone helped the people remember their promise (24:27). What helps you remember to serve God every day?
5. What is one way a kid your age can serve the LORD at home this week?

Recall questions

1. Where did Joshua gather all the tribes of Israel? *(Shechem, Joshua 24:1)*
2. What did the people say they would obey? *(The LORD's voice, 24:24)*
3. Where did Joshua set up the great stone? *(Under an oak, by the sanctuary of the LORD, 24:26)*

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4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **if it seem evil unto you** means if you don't want to, **choose you this day** means choose today, **ye** means you, **the flood** means the big river, **the Amorites** were a nation who lived in the land before Israel, **dwell** means live, and **my house** means my family. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Joshua told the people to choose whom they would serve. The Bible tells us to make that same choice: 'yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead' (Romans 6:13, KJV). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: choose one way to serve God at home every day, and do it without being asked.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Joshua 24:1: Where did Joshua gather all the tribes of Israel? *(Shechem)*
2. Joshua 24:13: What did God give them that they did not plant? *(Vineyards and oliveyards)*
3. Joshua 24:14: In what two ways should they serve the LORD? *(In sincerity and in truth)*
4. Joshua 24:15: Who did Joshua say would serve the LORD with him? *(His house)*
5. Joshua 24:16: What two words did the people say first? *("God forbid")*
6. Joshua 24:22: What did the people say they were? *(Witnesses)*
7. Joshua 24:26: Under what kind of tree did Joshua set up the stone? *(An oak)*
8. Joshua 24:27: Why would the stone be a witness? *(It had heard all the words of the LORD)*

Or choose the **As for Me and My House word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/as-for-me-and-my-house-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/as-for-me-and-my-house-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/as-for-me-and-my-house-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/as-for-me-and-my-house-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for everything You have done for us. Today we choose to serve You with a true heart. Help us obey Your voice and remember our promise every day. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Left out on purpose: in Joshua 24:19–20, Joshua warned that the LORD is "an holy God" and that turning away from Him to strange gods would bring harm. The story above says only that Joshua warned them serving God is serious. If a student reads ahead, explain that Joshua wanted them to understand their promise was real.

If a child's family doesn't go to church: Joshua said "as for me" first. Each child can choose to serve God and pray for their family. Never say anything that shames a child's family.

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