Preschool–Grade 6

As for Me and My House

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Everyone serves something. Choose to serve the LORD, with your whole heart, starting today.
Bible passage: Joshua 24:1–28. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." *Matthew 6:24 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Joshua 24. Write both memory verses on the board.

1. Opening game: What Gets My Time? (5–10 minutes)

Ask students to call out things kids their age spend time, money or attention on, and write them on the board: games, phones, friends, sports, school, music, shows. Then ask: *If someone watched your week, what would they say you serve? Can something good still take first place over God?* Say: "Joshua told a whole nation that they had to choose. Nobody could stay in the middle."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Joshua 24:1–28. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **Shechem** (24:1): a place in the land; say SHEK-em; **presented themselves before God**: came to stand before God
- **the other side of the flood** (24:2–3, 24:14–15): the far side of the big river, where Abraham's family lived
- **labour** (24:13): work; **oliveyards**: olive groves
- **fear the LORD** (24:14): honor Him as God; **sincerity**: really meaning it, without pretending
- **if it seem evil unto you** (24:15): if you don't want to; **my house**: my whole family
- **God forbid** (24:16): never, no way; **forsake**: leave, turn away from; **preserved** (24:17): kept safe
- **jealous** (24:19): God wants His people's whole heart, not shared with other gods
- **incline your heart** (24:23): turn your heart toward
- **covenant** (24:25): a solemn promise with God; **statute and ordinance**: rules to live by
- **inheritance** (24:28): the land God gave each family

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Joshua spent twelve verses on what God had done (Joshua 24:2–13) before he asked for a choice. How does remembering what God has done for you make it easier to choose Him?
2. Joshua said, "choose you this day" (24:15). Why "this day" and not someday? What happens when we put off a choice like that?
3. "As for me and my house" (24:15): Joshua decided for himself before anyone else answered. How can one person's choice help a whole family or a whole group of friends?
4. The people said "we will serve the LORD" three times (24:18, 24:21, 24:24). Joshua still told them to put away the strange gods among them (24:23). Why is saying it not the same as doing it?
5. Matthew 6:24 says no man can serve two masters. What are some "masters" that compete with God for first place in a preteen's life?
6. The stone was a witness that heard every word (24:27). What could be a "witness stone" for you, something that reminds you of your choice to serve God?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Joshua 24:15: **if it seem evil unto you** means if you don't want to; **ye** means you; **the flood** means the big river; **the Amorites** were a nation who lived in the land before Israel; **dwell** means live. In Matthew 6:24, **despise** means look down on, and **mammon** means money and riches.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Joshua 24:15 this week; keep working on Matthew 6:24 next week too.

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Joshua's question is still the question: whom will you serve? Paul wrote, 'yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead' (Romans 6:13, KJV). God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

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6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What has God done for me and my family? Make a list, like Joshua did (Joshua 24:2–13).
2. What is one thing that tries to take first place over God in my life? What will I "put away" (24:23)?
3. Write your own "as for me" sentence: what you choose, starting this day. Then write a short prayer asking God to help you keep it.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: find a small stone and keep it where you will see it every day, as your own reminder of the choice you made.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for everything You have done for us. We choose this day to serve You, with a true heart and not just with words. Help us put away anything that takes Your place, obey Your voice, and help our families serve You too. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

About Joshua 24:19–20: students will read Joshua's warning that the LORD is "an holy God" and "a jealous God," and that turning to strange gods would bring harm. Read it as the text says, without adding to it: Joshua wanted them to know their promise was serious, and the people answered, "Nay; but we will serve the LORD" (24:21). And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua (24:31).

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

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