Preschool–Grade 6

Be Strong and Courageous

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

Main point: Be strong and of a good courage. God is with us wherever we go, and He wants us to keep His Word and obey it.
Bible passage: Joshua 1:1–9. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." *Joshua 1:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), masking tape, a paper plate or a light book for each team, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Put a long straight line of masking tape on the floor.

1. Opening game: Don't Turn Aside (5–10 minutes)

Make two teams. One at a time, each player puts a paper plate or a light book on their head and walks heel-to-toe along the tape line without stepping off to the right or the left. If the plate falls or a foot steps off, they start again. Ask: *What helped you stay on the line? What made you wobble?* Say: "God told Joshua, 'turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.' Let's find out what 'it' was."

2. Bible story: God Is With Joshua (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Joshua 1. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Who was Joshua? Joshua the son of Nun had been Moses' helper since he was "a young man" (Exodus 33:11). He was one of the twelve men who searched the land, and with Caleb he said, "the LORD is with us: fear them not" (Numbers 14:6–9). Before Moses died, he told Joshua in front of all Israel, "Be strong and of a good courage" (Deuteronomy 31:7).

A new leader. Look up Joshua 1:1–2. A **minister** is a helper who serves. **Arise** means get up. The people were camped across the river from the land God promised them.

God's promise. Look up Joshua 1:3–5. The sole of your foot is the bottom of your foot. Every place they walked in the land, God would give them. **Fail thee** means let you down; **forsake thee** means leave you alone.

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Be strong. Look up Joshua 1:6–7. Of a good courage and **very courageous** mean very brave. **Observe to do** means be careful to obey. **Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left** means don't step off the path of God's law even a little. That was our game! **Prosper** means do well.

God's Word. Look up Joshua 1:8. Shall not depart out of thy mouth means keep talking about it. **Meditate therein day and night** means think about it all the time. Then Joshua would have **good success**.

God is with you. Look up Joshua 1:9. Dismayed means scared and discouraged. **Whithersoever thou goest** means everywhere you go. Joshua told the officers, "within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan" (1:11), and the people answered, "All that thou commandest us we will do" (1:16). They came to Jordan and passed over on dry ground (3:1, 3:17).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Joshua had to take Moses' place (1:1–2). Why might that have felt scary?
2. God said "be strong" three times (1:6, 1:7, 1:9). Why do you think He said it so many times?
3. God connected being strong with obeying His law (1:7). How does obeying God take courage?
4. How can we meditate on God's Word day and night (1:8)? What could you do at breakfast or at bedtime?
5. What is something that makes you afraid? How does Joshua 1:9 help?

Recall questions

1. What was the name of Joshua's father? *(Nun, Joshua 1:1)*
2. What did God promise about every place the sole of their foot would tread? *(He had given it to them, 1:3)*
3. What great river and great sea did God name as the edges of the land? *(The river Euphrates and the great sea, 1:4)*

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

Explain the old words: **have not I commanded thee?** means "Didn't I tell you?"; **of a good courage** means brave; **dismayed** means scared and discouraged; **whithersoever thou goest** means everywhere you go. 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.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God promised Joshua, 'I will be with thee.' God came to be with us too: Jesus is called 'Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us' (Matthew 1:23, KJV). God loves you, and 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: read one verse of God's Word every morning and every night, and say Joshua 1:9 when you feel afraid.

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 1:1: What was Joshua to Moses? *(His minister, his helper)*
2. Joshua 1:2: What river were they to go over? *(Jordan)*
3. Joshua 1:4: Where was the great sea? *(Toward the going down of the sun)*
4. Joshua 1:5: Who did God say He was with before? *(Moses)*
5. Joshua 1:8: When should Joshua meditate in the law? *(Day and night)*
6. Joshua 1:11: In how many days would they pass over Jordan? *(Three)*
7. Joshua 1:16: What did the people say they would do? *(All that thou commandest us)*
8. Deuteronomy 31:7: Who told Joshua to be strong before God did here? *(Moses)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are with us wherever we go and that You will not fail us or forsake us. Help us love Your Word, think about it day and night, and obey it with courage. In Jesus' name, amen."

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