Preschool–Grade 6

Be Strong and Courageous

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Be strong and brave, because God is with you wherever you go.
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, masking tape, 7 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put two lines of masking tape across the floor, about three big steps apart, to be the river Jordan. Write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Joshua 1:2, 1:5 and 1:9.

1. Opening game: Listen and Go (5 minutes)

Kids line up on one side of the "river." Call out commands. They obey only when you start with "Arise": "Arise, go over this Jordan!" (they step over the river), "Arise, go back!" "Jump!" (no "Arise," so nobody moves). Then ask: *Did you have to listen carefully? Was it easy to go when you knew what to do?* Say: "Today we will hear what God told Joshua when it was time to go over the river Jordan."

2. Bible story: God Is With Joshua (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Joshua 1, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Moses had led God's people for a long, long time. Now Moses had died (Joshua 1:1; Deuteronomy 34:5). The people were camped on one side of the river **Jordan**. On the other side was the land God had promised to give them (Joshua 1:2).

Moses had a helper named **Joshua**, the son of Nun (1:1). Now God spoke to Joshua. God said, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people" (1:2). That means, "Get up, Joshua! You lead all the people over the river into the land!"

That was a big job! But God made Joshua a promise: "as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (1:5). **Forsake** means leave you alone. God would never leave Joshua.

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The story continues: God told Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage" (1:6). **Courage** means being brave. Then God said it again: "be thou strong and very courageous" (1:7). God wanted Joshua to obey all of His law, the words God gave Moses (1:7). God said, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth" (1:8). That means, "Keep talking about My Word." And He said Joshua should **meditate**, or think about God's Word, day and night (1:8).

Read Joshua 1:9 from your Bible. God said it a third time: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid." Why could Joshua be brave? Because "the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." **Whithersoever thou goest** means everywhere you go!

So Joshua told the officers to tell the people to get ready, "for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan" (1:10–11). And the people said, "All that thou commandest us we will do" (1:16).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who led God's people before Joshua? *(Moses, Joshua 1:1–2)*
2. What river did God tell Joshua to go over? *(The Jordan, 1:2)*
3. What did God promise Joshua? *(I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, 1:5)*
4. How many times did God tell Joshua to be strong? *(Three times, 1:6, 1:7, 1:9)*
5. Why could Joshua be brave? *(The LORD his God was with him wherever he went, 1:9)*

4. Memory verse: Strong Steps (5 minutes)

Tape the 7 strips up in order: *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.* Explain the old words: **commanded thee** means told you to; **of a good courage** means brave; **dismayed** means scared and worried; **whithersoever thou goest** means everywhere you go. Read the verse together, making strong arms. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away, one each time, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God was with Joshua, and God is with us too. In fact, God came to be with us! The Bible calls Jesus 'Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us' (Matthew 1:23, KJV). God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: when you feel scared, make strong arms and say, "God is with me wherever I go!"

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Be Strong and Courageous word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/be-strong-and-courageous-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/be-strong-and-courageous-craft), or **Over the Jordan:** kids stand on one side of the tape river. Ask a question from part 3. When a child answers, everyone says, "Be strong and of a good courage!" and takes one giant step over the river and back.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are with us wherever we go. When we are scared, help us be strong and brave, and help us obey Your Word. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about crossing the river: in Joshua 1, God told Joshua to get ready. Three days later the people came to the Jordan (Joshua 3:1), and God made a dry path through it, and they all walked over on dry ground (3:17).

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