

A LIVING FAITH CLASSROOM LESSON

God Pledges to be with Joshua

Virtue: **Courage**

Scripture: **Joshua 1:9**

"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."



SAY: Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave, courageous, and more, but not always in the way you would expect. The hero in our Bible story today is Joshua. What makes him a hero? He served God with his whole heart. Serving God with your whole heart may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

God had chosen Moses to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. Unfortunately, Moses did not always obey what God told him to do. Because of this, God told Moses, "Because you did not trust me enough to do what I told you to do, you will not be the one to bring my people into the land I have given them." Moses asked God to give the people of Israel a new leader. God already had someone in mind.

God knew that **Joshua** had the ability to be a wise leader, so God told Moses to put Joshua in charge while everyone was watching. "Have him stand before the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him." (Numbers 27:19-20) Moses did what God told him to do. He presented Joshua to all of the people of Israel, and Eleazar the priest, laid his hands on Joshua and commissioned him to lead the people.

God's first words to Joshua were a reminder of what Joshua already believed about God. He said, "I want you and all of these people to get ready to go across the Jordan River. I want you to go into the land I am about to give the people of Israel." God told Joshua that all of the land was theirs—just as he had promised. It was finally time! And Joshua led the people into the Promised Land that he trusted God was giving them.

God told Joshua, "This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9) So, just as God gave the orders to Joshua, Joshua gave the orders to the people. Joshua even encouraged the people as God had encouraged him, "Just be strong and brave."

After Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the land that God had promised them, they came to the city of Jericho. Jericho had high walls around it and the gates were shut tight because the people were afraid of the Israelites. But the Lord said to Joshua, "I have given you the city of Jericho. You and your fighting men are to walk around the town once a day for six days. On the seventh day, you are to march around the town seven times with the priests blowing their ram's horns. When you hear the priests give one long blast on their horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can. Then the walls of the town will collapse and you can take the town." Joshua did as the Lord told him and the Israelites captured the town of Jericho.

All the people heard that the Israelites had captured Jericho and they were afraid. They knew God was helping Joshua and the Israelites. Joshua led the Israelites from city to city. They captured all the Promised Land.

Joshua was a true superhero since he stood firm in his belief in God. He told the people, "But suppose you don't want to serve God. Then choose for yourselves right now whom you will serve. You can choose the gods your people served or you can choose the gods the Amorites serve. After all, you are living in their land. But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

Because they saw Joshua's strong faith in God, the people replied, "We would never abandon the Lord and serve other gods. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. So we, too, will serve the Lord, for He alone is our God."