

GOD THE GOOD SHEPHERD

UNIT ONE: God's Heroes

Lesson 1: Into the Promised Land!

CONTENT:

1. Recapitulation:

- i. God rescued his people from Egypt by great miracles. (*Plagues, parting of the sea*)
- ii. He looked after them as they travelled through the desert. (*Manna, quails, water*)
- iii. He taught them how to live by giving them the Commandments.
- iv. They reached the Promised Land, but could not enter because they didn't believe.

2. After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and told him to take the people across the Jordan into the land which he had promised them. He promised to be with him and asked him to be obedient, strong and bold.

3. The people got ready to cross into the Promised Land by cleansing themselves. Then the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant into the river. As they stepped into the water, it moved back. All the people crossed over on dry ground.



4. The Ark of the Covenant was a special golden box which contained the 2 tablets given to Moses and a golden jar with manna. In our churches we have a special box called the Tabernacle. Jesus is present in it in the form of bread. We have Jesus always with us in this way. [CCC1183]

5. When we were baptised, we entered Our Promised Land, that is, God's Kingdom. The journey is not over, but God is with us and will help us and protect us. He will lead us like a shepherd till we reach heaven. [CCC1222]

ASSIGNMENT: Read handout at home. Find out the date of your Baptism and write it in the handout. Make two bookmarks with the words of the Bible verse. [Matthew 28:20] Give one to someone whom you feel needs to hear it.

REFERENCES: Joshua Ch 1,3 &4; Matthew 28:20.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts. Sheet for recapitulation. (It should be cut up into pieces.)

I. STARTER:

- Last year we heard the whole story of how Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and how they finally reached the land that God had promised them.
- Try and imagine that you are one of the Israelites. You were a child when you left Egypt and now it is 40 years later and you are now a grown-up. Some children come to you one day and ask you: How did we come here? Why do we live in tents and keep moving? Where did we come from? Be ready to tell one bit of the story. It will be good if you really imagine and tell the story as if you had been there. Tell what you saw, and how you felt: happy, sad, frightened, hungry.

[Distribute the story pictures to 12 volunteers. Let them stand in order, so that they are ready when their turn comes. Each one should tell a bit of the story as illustrated in the picture, beginning with the words given. Be sure to clap for and appreciate the students (when all have finished!)]

II. DEVELOPMENT:

- Let's find out what happened to the Israelites after this. For 40 more years the Israelites roamed the desert and then Moses died. Before he died, he called Joshua and told him, "You must take the people across the river into the Promised Land."

So now here are the Israelites, back at the Jordan River. Across the river is the land that God had said he would give them to live in. It is a good land, with rivers and green grass and fruit trees. But the people there seem to be very strong and will not let them come and settle down there without a fight. (In those days there were no governments and countries like we have now. There were kings with their armies who would fight each other and take whatever they could.)

There was also the River Jordan in front of them, deep and wide. By themselves they would not be able to cross and live in the land. But God was with his people.

One day God spoke to Joshua.

“My servant Moses is dead. Now you must lead my people across this river into the land that I am giving them. Be strong and brave. Don’t be frightened or worried. I will be with you as I was with Moses. Obey my commands and be brave! Remember, I am with you!”

III. REFLECTION:

- Close your eyes. If you were Joshua, how would you feel? Would you be afraid, or would you be strong and brave? Think about all the great miracles God has already done... Do you think you would trust him and move forward?

NEXT CLASS:

- God had told Joshua, “I AM WITH YOU!” *[Write the words on the blackboard]* The Israelites had something special which they carried around which showed them that God was with them. Do you know what that holy thing was? Can you guess? *[It was the stone tablets that God had given Moses.]*
- God had told Moses to build a special wooden box covered with gold and put the stone tablets into it, and also some manna in a golden jar. This special box was called the ARK OF THE COVENANT. *[Write the words on the blackboard]* It was the most holy thing for the Israelites.
- God told Joshua what to do and he obeyed. This is what happened:
First the people sanctified themselves. (that means they made themselves clean before God. Maybe they prayed and said sorry for their sins.)

Then Joshua told the priests, “Take the Ark of the Covenant and stand in front of all the people.” The priests picked up the Ark with the 2 long poles and stood in front of the people. They had covered the Ark with a special cloth because it was so holy.

Joshua shouted, “Now you will know that God is a living God and is with us!” He said to the priests, “Go into the water with the Ark!”

As the priests stepped into the water, the water went back and the river stopped flowing. There in front of them was dry land! (Does this remind you of something that happened before?) The priests walked to the middle of the river-bed and stayed there. Then all the people walked through safely to the other side.

After everyone had gone through, the priests carried the Ark to the other side. As soon as their feet touched the other side, WHOOSH! The water started flowing again.

How excited the people were as they saw this miracle! They put up their tents and that evening, they celebrated the Passover meal. (Remember, God had asked them to celebrate it every year?) Everyone felt very thankful to God. They said to each other, “God is really with us! He will surely help us to defeat our enemies and live in this land he has chosen for us!”

[Give out handouts and read the written matter.]

- What happened to Joshua and the Israelites still happens to us today, but in a different way. Can you think about it and tell me, How is our story like the story we just heard?

[The students look at the 2 pictures and try to match each one with what happens to us. Bring out:]

1. Just as the Israelites crossed the river and entered the Promised Land, we entered God's Kingdom when we were baptised and the water was poured on us,
2. Like the Ark of the Covenant contained the 2 stone tablets and the manna, we have a Tabernacle in the church. Instead of manna, we have something much more precious and holy. We have Jesus himself in the form of bread. We call the body of Jesus the Blessed Sacrament and we give it a special place in the church. Whenever we enter a church we bow before the Tabernacle, because God is present.

[The students fill in the missing words and draw pictures of their Baptism and a Tabernacle.]

IV. REFLECTION & PRAYER: *[If possible, this is done in a chapel or church]*

- Before going up to heaven Jesus took his friends up to a mountain. He said to them, "Remember, I am with you always to the end of the age."
- Though we are baptised and have entered God's kingdom, we still need God's help to obey God and to keep going till we reach heaven. Jesus is with us in a real way here in the Blessed Sacrament. He is like a shepherd who takes good care of his flock. If we visit him and spend a little time with him in the church, he will be able to look after us better and take us safely to heaven.
- We can meet him at Mass every Sunday, and even on weekdays. That is what the saints did. They would go for Mass as often as they could. This made them strong inside.

[Students spend a little time silently before the Blessed Sacrament.]

Home assignment: Read handout at home. ✕ Find out the date of your Baptism and write it in the handout. ✕ Make two bookmarks with the words of the Bible verse. [Matthew 28:20] Give one to someone whom you feel needs to hear it.