

Leader Suggestions

for

Joshua: Strong and Courageous

Dear leader,

Thank you for taking time to lead a group of young teens through this study of Joshua. I believe there is no more important calling than helping the next generation learn what the Word of God has to say to them. I pray that you will find it rewarding.

Sherree Funk

Before you begin:

Choose a meeting time and place that works well for you and the group. You will need **nine meeting times** if you want to include an introductory session for distributing books.

Allow about **ninety minutes for each session**. Expect to spend about thirty minutes in conversation over snacks or a meal. Unstructured fellowship time is important for this age group, and it gives you a chance to get to know them better, too. Some of this time can be used to share prayer concerns and answers to prayer.

You will benefit from doing the workbook work yourself in advance. This way you can share your own thoughts in the group setting, and you will be aware of some of the more challenging questions.

The classic 1956 movie, “*The Ten Commandments*,” is quite long, but you might wish to share select scenes with your group. I suggest purchasing a DVD with scene selection. I purchased a 50th Anniversary edition on two discs from

Amazon. If you choose to share video clips, you should preview the scenes and determine what you will discuss ahead of time. Important scenes are described in Appendix 1.

Introductory Session:

1. Hand out workbooks, review calendar.
2. Discuss the importance of doing the workbook work at home. The work should not take longer than about 25 minutes total, and could easily be done in 5 minutes a day, each day of the week.
3. Make sure everyone has a Bible. The study guide uses scripture from the NIV, so it is easiest to use that version, but other translations may be used.
4. **Names.** Be sure everyone knows everyone else's name. Play a game or have fun with introductions.
5. **Small group etiquette.** Go over the basics of respect for each other's answers, confidentiality, doing the homework, mutual care and concern.
6. Don't expect students to know a lot about Joshua ahead of time. Perhaps some of the group members have never been in a serious Bible study. Encourage them. The reading is not too much. Have everyone look for the books of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua so they know where the bulk of the reading will be found.

Discussion starter questions:

Note: These questions are meant to encourage sharing and help steer your discussion toward the work done in the study guide. They are optional. You may use your own questions, or just go over the work in order. Or simply ask what was interesting or meaningful to students.

1. What do you hope to get out of this Bible study?
2. Can you name one thing you would like everyone to pray for you this week? Share these around the circle and write them on the first page of Week One.

Week One – Born into Slavery, Destined for Victory

Suggested location:

Home base. This could be someone's living room, or a classroom at church, or a room at the Public Library.

Activities:

Touch on last week's prayer requests, ask for any new prayer needs. Do this every week. Share one or two scenes from "*The Ten Commandments*." Good scenes for this week are Scenes 18 and 19. (Check Appendix 1 for scene summaries.)

Starter questions:

1. What did you learn about Joshua's family tree?
2. Why do you think there is still slavery in our world?
3. Does it ever seem to you like God is unaware of some of the terrible situations people are in?
4. Do you believe God always does what he says He will do?
5. Do you think the movie clips are realistic? Why or why not?

Week Two – Learning from a Leader: Part 1

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

Take prayer requests, as usual. Show scenes from the movie, especially scenes about the Exodus and the Red Sea crossing. (Scenes 10 and 13) The special effects are amazing for 1956. You might want to serve

desert food: manna and quail? Well, maybe bread, honey and water to remind them of the wilderness experience.

Starter questions:

1. What are you waiting for? Do you wish you could grow up faster?
2. Do you think you complain a lot or not? Does it do any good?
3. Do you give credit to God for the good things that happen to you?

Week Three – Learning from a Leader: Part 2

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

Scenes from the movie regarding Moses' time on Mount

Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments and the golden calf incident are really very good. Use scenes 14-17.

Starter questions:

1. Could you follow the Ten Commandments carefully and exactly for one week?
2. What do you think about the people building a Golden Calf to worship?
3. What do you think is the hardest Commandment to obey?
4. Are you facing a situation like one that a Biblical character faced? What can you learn from that?

Week Four – Brave but Outnumbered

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

Serve the BIGGEST GRAPES you can find.

Play a game of “Let’s Make a Deal.”

You need two \$5 bills and two envelopes with a \$10 gift card to some local store or eatery. Only 2 of these 4 things will be given away.

Send students A and B out of the room.

Instruct remaining students to try to convince the contestant to choose one of the prizes. Ask most of the students to promote the visible \$5 prize, and ask just one or two to promote the prize in the envelope, that cannot be seen. Let them be loud and persuasive. Have Student A come in alone to choose his prize.

Then repeat with Student B. Discuss how hard it is to choose when everyone is shouting different directions. And how it is easier to take what we know over the unknown.

Starter questions:

1. How do you stand against the majority in your school?
2. How does courage come from faith?
3. How does discipline give you strength?

Week Five – Step into the River of Life

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

Show the last scene from *The Ten Commandments*, Disc 2, Scene 18, noting inaccuracies.

Build a “wall house” using legos or some other building material.

Have red licorice strips, to simulate the red cord of Rahab. Or give each student a red ribbon, red string or yarn to remind them of the faith of Rahab.

Starter questions:

1. What is inaccurate about the last scene of the movie?
2. Is there a scary situation you have faced that God has helped you through?
3. Rahab’s faith was a surprise. Have you ever been surprised by someone’s faith?

Week Six— Conquest

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

If the weather is good, you could play capture the flag outdoors. Or you could reenact the “battle” of Jericho.

Talk about something you might do to help the less fortunate. This might be done for Week Seven. Take ideas from the kids: collecting food for a food bank, clothing or food for the homeless, help for elderly, a kindness for pastors or priests, or home repair for the needy. Then make a plan to **do** one of these projects.

Starter questions:

1. Have you ever had a “burning bush” moment?
2. Have you ever gotten away with something you knew was wrong? Did it bother you?
3. Why do you think God wanted Joshua to destroy all the people living in Canaan?
4. Is war ever justified?

Week Seven – After the War is Over

Suggested location:

Home base.

Activities:

Perhaps you can deliver your collected food, clothing or other items, or further plan for your service project. The point is to emphasize justice, mercy, and generosity as marks of a leader.

Starter questions:

1. Who in your community is treated unfairly? Is there anything you can do about it?
2. Why is it important to remain focused after a big victory?
3. Have you ever asked a leader for something and been ignored?

Week Eight – Remember

Suggested location:

Meet by a creek or slow-moving shallow river.

Activities:

ONLY IF SAFE: **Only** do this activity if the creek is very shallow and there is no danger of losing one's footing! Be sure to have other adults with you. Ask each student to wade into the water and pick up a stone from the middle of the river. Then, as each one places a stone on the memorial pile, have them tell one thing they have learned in the study or something they have seen God do recently.

As part of an informal worship service, have each one read their personal Psalm of Remembrance (p 87)

Consider having communion but only if an ordained pastor or priest can serve the elements.

Finish with a picnic if possible near the river or creek.

Starter questions:

1. What are your favorite souvenirs?
2. What signs or symbols remind you of something else?
3. What are you going to remember most about the character of Joshua?
4. What have you learned about God from this study?

Appendix 1:

Scene Summaries from *The Ten Commandments* 50th Anniversary Collection

Scene suggestions for Week One: (especially*)

Disc 1:

Scene 15 “The Binding Tie” 8 min.

An interesting scene in which Moses is introduced to his Hebrew family. It is set in the Hebrew home of Moses' parents, his sister Miriam, and brother Aaron.

Scene 16 “Brick Pits” 7:15

A view of the harsh conditions of the Hebrew slaves. A man is killed and a woman is summoned against her will.

*Scene 18 “Master Butcher” 5:15

In this scene, Joshua is arrested and whipped. Moses saves him and kills the Egyptian. Moses then flees.

*Scene 29 “Burning Bush” 6:45

In this dramatic encounter with God, Moses understands what God is calling him to do. Notice the use of scripture from other parts of the Bible (Ruth, prophets, gospels) when Moses returns from the Burning Bush.

Disc 2:

Scene 2 "Return to Egypt" 5:15

Moses confronts Pharaoh. His staff becomes a snake.

Scene 3 "Bricks without Straw" 2 minutes

Here the people's attitude toward Moses is very negative as a result of harder work.

Scene Suggestions for Week Two:**Disc 2:**

Scene 10 "Exodus" ~11 minutes

As the people begin leaving Egypt en masse, Joshua is shown taking some responsibility for organizing the traveling parties. (Some out of place scripture here, too)

Scene 13 "Parting of the Red Sea" 7:30

With amazing special effects, especially for 1956, the sea parts as the Israelites pass through and the Egyptian chariots are flooded. Moses gives credit to God.

Scene Suggestions for Week Three:**Disc 2**

Scenes 14-17 ~10 minutes total

Scene 14 "Mt. Sinai"

While Moses is on the mountain, the people grow restless and begin to build a golden calf.

Scene 15 "Finger of God"

Moses is on the mountain and God carves the commandments into the stone tablets.

Scene 16 "Idolaters"

The people engage in riotous revelry around the golden idol.

Scene 17 "The Lord's Side"

Moses returns from the mountain. The people are called to account. Moses throws down the tablets and the unrepentant are killed. Narration suggests that the 40 years of wandering is a result of the Golden Calf incident, which is incorrect.

Scene Suggestions for Week Five:**Disc 2**

Scene 18

4 minutes

In this scene Moses passes authority to Joshua on Mt. Nebo. Notice Joshua says “As for me and my house.....” which he actually says much later in the Bible (Joshua 24:15) Also, notice that Moses says “Proclaim liberty.....” which is not what will happen when the people enter the Promised Land. Instead the people will be conquered and driven out.

Conclusion

All in all, the movie, in its effort to be super-dramatic, often misrepresents the Biblical story by placing familiar scriptures in improper contexts. Yet *The Ten Commandments* must be appreciated as an excellent visual interpretation of this truly great epoch in Biblical history. It gives Joshua the important supportive role that we are studying in this book. It also gives us a good feel for the period, the environment, and for the agonies endured by the Israelites in Egypt.

The movie took five years to make, employing a cast of thousands. It was shot on location in Egypt and Sinai for ten weeks, and then on a Hollywood set for another eight months. Director Cecil B. DeMille was 75 years old when the movie was completed. Charleton Heston, a great movie star, claims Moses

was his greatest role. In addition to his huge part as

Moses, Heston was allowed to be the voice of God in the Burning Bush scene. Interestingly, Heston’s infant son was cast as the baby Moses!

In the 50th Anniversary DVD edition, a very interesting voice-over commentary is available. As a leader, you may wish to view some scenes with the commentary in advance.

