



Date: _____
Series: Holiday
Summer Year 3, Lesson 1

Memorial Day Weekend

Take Home Point: *Never forget the good God has done.
*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Joshua 3:1-4:24

Key Verse: Psalm 103:2, "Praise the Lord, my soul, and never forget all the good he has done."

We will help kids know:

- Memorial Day is a time for remembering the blessings of our country and freedom won by soldiers who gave their lives.
- We want to never forget the good God has done for us, especially through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus.
- Joshua used rocks to remember the good God did in rescuing the Israelites from slavery and leading them to the Promised Land.




We will help kids feel:

- Thankful as they remember the good God has done for them.
- Surprised at how much good he has done when they stop to consider it all.

We will help kids do:

- Count their blessings.
- Take a memory rock with them to remember the good God has done for them.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Students learn about Memorial Day Weekend and remember good things God has done for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pop rock candy
Large Group 	4 7 8 11	<p>Overview</p> <p>Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Remembers Good Things God Has Done” — Gordy is rockin’ out for “Memory Weekend.”</p> <p>Audience Participation Storytelling: Kids hear about the miracle walk Joshua took to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River as found in Joshua 3 and 4. Then they participate by creating their own memory rocks of the good things God has done in their lives.</p> <p>Puppet Conclusion: “Gordy Remembers Good Things God Has Done” – Gordy decides that the best memory is what Jesus did for us when he died on the cross so that we may each arrive in heaven – our Promised Land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twelve paper grocery sacks • newspaper page per kid • inexpensive polished stones per kid
Small Group Application 	4	Students pass a rock around the circle and when they get it, they remember a good thing God has done for them by expressing it in thanks to him.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one rock per group • optional snack

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Supplies: pop rock candy or other very small candy that can be passed out little bits at a time. (The smaller the portions, the better, since kids will receive one small part for every blessing remembered.)

Show kids the pop rock candy and say the following:

Our lesson today has something to do with rocks but I won't tell you what it is right now. I want you to each share some of the things you are thankful for, and as you do, I will share some of these pop rocks with you.

Tell us one good thing God did for you THIS week.

Hand a small piece of candy to the child each time he/she shares a response.

What is one good thing God did for you LAST week?

What is one good thing God did for you last YEAR?

Do you think it is easy or hard to remember the good things God has done for you? Why or why not?

Remembering the people and events that allow us to have a good life is a very important part of being thankful. This special three-day weekend we are celebrating is called Memorial Day Weekend. The leaders of our country do not want people to forget what soldiers did for us in the past. Because of this, many years ago the government leaders decided to designate a special weekend to remember the soldiers who gave their lives to protect our country.

Can you share the name of a soldier who has served in a war?

Give some more candy to any kids who identify a person.

What are things that remind us of our country and what people have done to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today? (Example: American flags flown this weekend.)

How many stripes are on the flag? (Thirteen.)

What do the stripes stand for? (The thirteen original colonies.)

What does the color red stand for? *(For many people, it reminds them that red is the color of blood.)*

If time permits, let the children talk about the blessings of living in our country. Then say the following:

Today we will discover a different way to remember good things. We will see that one of God's leaders in the Bible used rocks to remember the good things God had done for his people. We also will use rocks to remember the good things God has done for us. It's important to **never forget the good God has done.*

Large Group: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Overview

Puppet Presentation: Memorial Day – Gordy is rockin' out for "Memory Weekend."

Audience Participation Storytelling: Kids hear about the miracle walk Joshua took to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River as found in Joshua 3 and 4. Then they participate by creating their own memory rocks of the good things God has done in their lives.

Puppet Conclusion: Gordy decides that the best memory is what Jesus did for us when he died on the cross so that we may each arrive in heaven – our Promised Land.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have kids refer to Joshua 3 and 4 in their Bibles.

What group of men went before the people in crossing the Jordan River? *(Joshua 3:6. The priests.)*

What did they carry? *(Joshua 3:8. The ark of the promise or covenant.)*

What did the ark represent? *(Joshua 3:7. That the presence of the Lord was with the people.)*

What happened to the Jordan River when the priests stepped into it? *(Joshua 3:15-17. The water stopped flowing from upstream and rose up like a dam so the people crossed on dry ground.)*

Why did Joshua have 12 stones from the Jordan River set up? *(Joshua 4:23-24. To remind the people and their descendants that the Lord had dried up the Jordan River ahead of them so they could enter the Promised Land. Read Joshua 4:24!!! **"The Lord did this so that everyone in the world would know his mighty power and that you would fear the Lord your God every day of your life."**)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think the priests who carried the ark of promise stood in the middle of the Jordan until the whole nation had crossed? *(Maybe so that the people would see the ark as they passed by and would know God cared for and would be with every one of them.)*

Why do you think Joshua had a man from each of the 12 tribes gather a rock from the middle of the Jordan in front of the ark of the Lord's promise, instead of just collecting rocks from the edge? *(Maybe to remind the people that it was a mighty miracle that the Lord had done (remember the Jordan was at flood stage), and as a reminder of where the people had been.)*

Why did the priests cross the river first, holding the ark in front of the people? *(The ark symbolized God's presence and this gave the people confidence because God was going into the land before them.)*

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

What is our Promised Land? *(Heaven.)*

Who came into our presence to open the way for us to enter our Promised Land? *(Jesus.)*

What did Jesus do so that we can enter the Promised Land? *(He gave his life for us.)*

Just like the red on the flag represents the blood the soldiers gave for our country, Jesus shed his blood so we can live with him in his “country,” our Promised Land.

God has given us so much, but the greatest thing we should be thankful for and remember is Jesus.

Application Activity:

Supplies: one rock per group

The key verse from Psalm 103:2 says, “*Praise the Lord, my soul, and never forget all the good he has done.*”

Let’s see how many times we can pass this rock around the circle, and each time we get it, think of something good God did for us that we never want to forget. The faster we think and discuss, the more we can pass the rock. But when we discuss the good things God has done for us, let’s also express our thanks to him. So when you get the rock in your hands, your discussion and thanksgivings might sound something like this: “God thank you for giving me parents who help me learn about you.”

Option: You may incorporate a snack into this part of the lesson. Tell kids that the proportion of the snack they get is related to how many times the rock makes it around the circle.

Closing Prayer:

Since you have already given thanks, be sure to wrap up thanking God for the greatest gift of all, Jesus, who made the way for us to enter the Promised Land. Then send children off with the take home point: ****Never forget the good God has done.***

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Large Group Presentation

Memorial Day Gordy Remembers Good Things God Has Done Puppet Presentation

Mr. King: Kids, shall we welcome Gordy?

Kids call, "Gordy! Gordy! Gordy!"

Gordy enters with his head bobbing up and down.

Mr. King: Gordy, what are you doing?

Gordy: I'm rockin' out!

Mr. King: You're rockin' out? It looks like fun!

Gordy: It sure is! I really rocked in our small group.

Mr. King: What do you mean?

Gordy: Well, we had this rock candy that reminded us of rocks, and we got some for every blessing or good thing we could remember God did for us. So, as you know, whenever there is candy involved, I can really rock!

Mr. King: You must have remembered lots of good things God has done for you.

Gordy: I sure did!

Mr. King: Like what?

Gordy: Well, there was uh, er, uh... I know I HAD some. I guess I forgot! Do you have any candy? Maybe then I can remember.

Mr. King: Gordy, this is more important than just getting more candy. Today we want to **never forget the good God has done.*

Gordy: Is that why we have "Memory Weekend?"

Mr. King: Oh, you mean Memorial Weekend?

Gordy: Whatever. I forgot what you call it.

Mr. King: Well, yes. Memorial Weekend is something our country does to remember soldiers who gave their lives for our country. We don't want to forget their sacrifice. But today we will learn how God wanted his people to never forget that he was the one who rescued them and gave them victory. He even used rocks to help them never forget.

Gordy: Rocks? How did he use rocks?

Mr. King: God had his people use rocks to **never forget the good God has done*. Psalm 103:2 says, *"Praise the Lord, my soul, and never forget all the good he has done."* Let me tell you what happened.

Storytelling Using Audience Participation

Supplies: twelve paper grocery sacks, enough newspaper so every child can have a page, and inexpensive polished stones available at a nature store or on the Internet.

Put your notes for storytelling in the Bible at Joshua 3 so that everyone can see that this event comes from the Bible.

Introduction -- History of God's deliverance

Today's Bible event begins with hundreds of thousands of people gathered by the side of a river. They were called Israelites. For forty years, they wandered in the wilderness. There they were fed day by day, with God's manna and quail. God had been good to them.

Their parents had once lived in Egypt as slaves. They had cried out to God to deliver them. So, God sent Moses and worked mighty miracles through Moses until finally they escaped the land of slavery when they miraculously crossed the Red Sea.

But now they faced another body of water. This was the Jordan River and it was the rainy season. The river was flooding and impossible to cross for this many thousands of people. Yet, on the other side, was the Promised Land that God had told them would be theirs.

Joshua's crossing orders

After three days of waiting in the camp, Joshua told the officers to spread this news. He said, "You will see the priests carrying the ark of the Lord. Be ready to follow it. When you do, it is time to move."

Remember the ark of the Lord was a very holy, gold-covered box that reminded people that God was with them. Joshua told the people, "Tomorrow you will see how God still does mighty works for you." The people were excited because at last they would enter the Promised Land. But how would they get past the river? They had to trust that God would do something special.

The miracle walk

The next day, Joshua told the priests to take the ark and walk in front of the people. He said that the people should follow the priests. He said to his officers, "Don't let the people follow too closely. Stay one-half mile behind them."

So the priests carrying the ark began to march. When they got to the Jordan River, they stopped. Joshua remembered what God had told him. "Have the priests step into the water, and when you do, I will form a dam. It will block the water and they will walk through on dry ground."

They did as the Lord had told Joshua. It was a miracle walk. As soon as the priests stepped into the water, all the flooded waters stopped. The water became a wall on one side. The priests then walked through the middle of the dry riverbed. They stood holding the ark of the Lord's promise while the many thousands of people crossed right by them to dry ground on the other side.

Setting up twelve large memory stones

When the people had crossed, Joshua gave the command, "One man from each tribe should go to the middle of the Jordan River. Look in front of the ark of the Lord. Take a large stone on your shoulder. One stone will represent each tribe of Israel. This will be a sign for you. Carry it out of the river and we will set them up as a memorial in the new Promised Land. Then, whenever your children ask you what these stones mean, you can tell them about this day. This day it was the Lord who went before you and caused the waters to stop flowing. It was this day that you passed over and into the land God had promised to give you. It was on this day that we were sure that God *is* with us, just like he was with our forefathers whom he led out of Egypt."

The water closes

After the stones were gathered to the side, the Lord said to Joshua, "Order the priests who carried the ark of the promise to come out of the Jordan River."

Joshua ordered the priests, “Come out!” When their feet stepped out of the riverbed and onto dry land, the water of the Jordan River rushed back and returned to the high flood level it had been before. Everyone looked with wonder at the water. They remembered what a special miracle they had seen. They looked at the memory rocks and knew what they must do. They must never forget that God had been good and God was with them. They must tell their children and their children’s children after them.

Audience participation

Pass out a half sheet of newspaper for every student.

I don’t have big rocks here, but I do have twelve paper sacks that we can imagine are rocks. I also gave you newspaper that can be stuffed in a paper sack to help them look more like large rocks.

Would you help me stuff these rocks with memories? Think of the memories you have of how God has been good to you. Maybe your memory is of how God answered a special prayer. Maybe it’s how God helped you with a special problem.

Or maybe it has to do with the best rescue you could ever have – a rescue that was so special that it took Jesus himself to do it for you.

Don’t tell anyone yet what you are remembering, but when you think of it, wad your paper up and stuff it in a paper sack. When we are finished, we will have twelve large memory rocks.

Have students think of memories as they wad their paper. Then you might have them say a silent prayer to thank God for how he’s been good to them as they stuff the paper bag that is passed through the audience. Gather all twelve stuffed bags and build a pyramid on stage.

Gordy Remembers Good Things God Has Done

Puppet Conclusion

Mr. King: Well, Gordy, what do you think of our twelve memory rocks?

Gordy: They look like paper bags to me!

Mr. King: Well, use your imagination.

Gordy: Oh, sure. I get it! You mean memory rocks.

Mr. King: Yes. What do you think about them?

Gordy: Well, I wonder what are some of the things kids remembered and were thankful for.

Mr. King: Yes, I do, too. As a matter of fact, let's ask.

Interview kids for things for which they are thankful. Gordy and Mr. King can spontaneously interact during audience feedback. Wrap up the discussion with the following:

Mr. King: Gordy, these rocks remind us to **never forget the good God has done*. What do you think is the best good thing God has done for us?

Gordy: Well, he's done lots of good things, like Memorial Day to remember our country and our soldiers.

Mr. King: Yes.

Gordy: And there are lots of good things to remember like our family and the good stuff we have.

Mr. King: Yes. What do you think is the best?

Gordy: Well, I think the best thing would be God, the Father, sending Jesus.

Mr. King: Why do you say that?

Gordy: Well, we shouldn't forget him because he gave his life for us so that we can go to heaven.

Mr. King: Right. Jesus gave his life so that we can go to heaven – our own Promised Land – to be with him. And, also, he lives with us now every day. So, Gordy, why don't you close us in prayer?

Gordy: Okay. Dear God, help us never forget the good that you have done. Especially help us to never forget Jesus. You gave Joshua and those people a long time ago rocks to help them never forget. Sometimes I forget easily, so maybe you can give me something to help me always remember. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Mr. King: Well, Gordy, I'm glad you asked for something that will help you never forget. Today you and the kids will each receive a smooth shiny stone as a way to say **never forget the good God has done*. And maybe that rock will remind you of some things God has done for you.

Pass out the rocks as children leave the area.