

God's People Choose to Serve Him

Lesson 4



Scripture: Joshua 24:1-27













Bible Memory: Joshua 24:15

Focus: ♥ We should choose to serve God.

Heart to Heart Teacher Devotion

Life is full of choices. We choose where to live, what to wear, what occupation skills to develop, and so forth. The biggest choice, though, is one that has eternal consequences. The choice: serve God or not. Be like Joshua, and stand firm in your conviction to serve God. Guide the children whom you teach to want to serve God with the talents and abilities He has given them. Help them to make the best choice they will ever make.

Lesson 4 at a Glance

<p>1 FOCUS IN Use one of these activities to help children explain making choices.</p>	<p> Quick Step Which Would You Choose?</p> <p> Option If You Choose</p> <p> Bible Memory Introduce the Bible Memory verse.</p>	<p>HeartShaper Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which Would You Choose? reproducible page • none • <i>Resources</i> sheet 1 Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster 	<p>Other Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • markers • pairs of objects that represent choices kids make (see activity), shopping bag • Bible, reusable adhesive
<p>2 EXPLORE HIS WORD Use all of these activities to help children tell about a time God's people chose to serve God.</p>	<p> Bible Exploration Joshua 24:1-27</p> <p> Bible Review Activity</p> <p> Bible Memory Joshua 24:15</p> <p> Optional Bible Skill Builder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teaching Pictures</i> 1–4, <i>Resources</i> sheet 1 Joshua Bible Story Name Card • <i>Resources</i> sheet 2 Race to the Promised Land Game Cards for lessons 1–4, <i>Resources</i> CD Unit 1 Review Game printable file • none 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whiteboard, dry-erase marker, Bibles, large paper bag, old newspapers, masking tape • masking tape • Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker
<p>3 MAKE IT REAL Use one of these activities to help children discover ways to serve God.</p>	<p> Quick Step Ways to Serve God</p> <p> Option Scenes of Service</p> <p> Option Story from <i>Weekly Bible Reader</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> p. 9 • <i>Resources</i> sheet 3 Scenes of Service Cards • <i>Weekly Bible Reader</i> issue 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pencils • reusable adhesive • none
<p>4 LIVE IT OUT Use one of these activities to help children choose a way they will serve God.</p>	<p> Quick Step I Will Serve the Lord!</p> <p> Option A Stone Reminder</p> <p>Saying Good-bye</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Activities</i> p. 10 and stickers • none • <i>Weekly Bible Reader</i> issue 4, <i>Activities</i> p. 2 and stickers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colored pencils • medium-size stones, permanent markers • none

Focus In (10-15 minutes)

- 1 Use one of these activities to help children **explain making choices**. Use the Bible Memory activity to introduce the memory verse.

Welcome

- Welcome each child by name.
- Engage early arrivers by offering one or more of the activities described on the Additional Activities for Unit 1 page.

Quick Step Which Would You Choose?



SAY: **Today we're going to think about what it means to make choices.** Distribute the reproducible page and markers. Read the directions aloud. Give children time to circle which they would choose in each row. Note: Using a highlighter can be easier for the child who has difficulty managing paper/pencil tasks. Ask children to explain how they made their choices. Talk about why some choices were easy to make and others were harder.

ASK: **Who can tell us about a hard choice you've had to make?** Let several children share.

SAY: **Sometimes the choices we make are neither right nor wrong—they are just choices. But sometimes we do have to choose between something that's right or wrong. One big choice we each have to make is whether to serve God. ♥ We should choose to serve God.**

Option If You Choose

SAY: **Let's think about what it means to make choices.** Have the children stand in a part of the room where they would be able to move a little to the left and a little to the right. Pull two food items from your bag. **If you choose the** (item 1), **move to the left. If you choose the** (item 2), **move to the right.** Ask a few children to explain how they made their choice. Have kids come back to the middle. Do the same with other pairs of items you have gathered. Talk about why some choices were easy to make and others were harder.

ASK: **Who can tell us about a hard choice you've had to make?** Let several children share.

SAY: **A choice we each have to make is whether to serve God. God wants us to serve Him, but it is our choice. ♥ We should choose to serve God.**

Bible Memory Joshua 24:15

Have a volunteer read Joshua 24:15. ASK: **What does this verse tell us?** (that it's our choice whether to serve God) Display the Bible Memory poster. Start with all the add-on words in place. Read the verse together. Remove one or two add-on words and repeat the verse, saying from memory the missing words. Continue until all the add-on words have been removed. Ask for volunteers who want to say the complete verse by themselves. SAY: **Joshua made the best choice when he chose to serve God. ♥ We should choose to serve God too.**

Focus

♥ We should choose to serve God.

Materials

copies of the Which Would You Choose? reproducible page, markers (or highlighters)



Note

See the teacher contents page for the location of reproducible pages. The Which Would You Choose? activity is also provided with the lesson 4 printable files on the *Resources* CD.

Materials

pairs of objects that represent choices kids make (2 different fruits or vegetables, 2 pieces of sports equipment, 2 videos, 2 items of clothing, etc.), shopping bag (or large box)



Before Class

Gather the items that represent choices kids might make. Place the items in a shopping bag.

Materials

Bible, *Resources* sheet 1 Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster, reusable adhesive



Transition to Explore His Word

See the *Resources* CD Transition Tips printable file. As children gather, make sure you have all the materials you need.

Focus

♥ We should choose to serve God.

Explore His Word (20 minutes)

2 Use all of these activities to help children **tell about a time God's people chose to serve God.**

Bible Background for the Teacher

Shechem, the place where Joshua gathered together the leaders of all the tribes, was a historical site. God had made a covenant with Abraham there (Genesis 12:6, 7), and Abraham's grandson Jacob had set up an altar there (33:18-20). Gathering the leaders at Shechem was Joshua's last public act as a servant of God.

Joshua reminded the people of all the things God had done for them. Joshua reminded his listeners of God's miraculous parting of the Red Sea. Most of the listeners had seen Canaan conquered firsthand. Joshua knew these people were often quick to speak of their faithfulness to God, but they were also quick to be unfaithful to God. Joshua made this a very serious time in the national history of the Israelites, hoping that they would stick to their wise decision.

Worship Time

If you want to have a time of worship, see the *Resources* CD Unit 1 Worship Time Ideas printable file.

Materials

whiteboard, dry-erase marker, Bibles, *Teaching Pictures* 1-4, prepared Joshua name card from *Resources* sheet 1, large paper bag (or garbage bag), old newspapers, masking tape



Before Class

If you did not prepare the name card for lesson 1, do so now. See the instructions in Bible Exploration for lesson 1. Stuff the paper bag with crumpled newspapers and tape it closed, shaping it to resemble a large stone.

Bible Exploration Joshua 24:1-27

SAY: Today's Bible story once again comes from the book of Joshua. Write "Joshua 24:1" on the board. Have the children open their Bibles to the table of contents. Ask kids to find the Old Testament section and then look down the list until they find the book of Joshua. Help kids turn to Joshua 24:1. Ask for a volunteer to read the first part of the verse.

Write "We will serve the Lord" on the board. Choose a volunteer to play the part of Joshua. Give that child the name card to wear, and ask him to stand beside you. Place the stone beside Joshua. **SAY: In the Bible story today, you will pretend to be the group of God's people. When I ask Joshua to point to you during the story, say "We will serve the Lord."** Practice this with the kids. **Listen so you can tell about a time God's people chose to serve God.**

Joshua called God's people together to tell them the words of God. Joshua said, "This is what the Lord says: 'I was with Abraham, your father. I was with Moses and Aaron. I helped them lead you out of Egypt. I drowned the Egyptian horses and chariots in the Red Sea when they chased you. After that, you lived in the wilderness for a long time. I brought you to the land of Canaan.'" Show Teaching Pictures 1 and 2. Ask the children to tell what they remember about the events pictured.

Joshua continued speaking. "God said, 'I gave the land to you. You did not do it with your own sword and bow.' Show Teaching Picture 3. Review how God helped His people at Jericho; then continue. God also said, 'You live in cities you did not build and eat fruit you did not plant. I have always done what I said I would do for you.'"

Then Joshua said to the people, "Serve God faithfully. Quit serving pretend gods. Are you going to serve pretend gods or the Lord? Today you must choose whom you will serve. My household and I choose to serve the Lord."

The people listened to Joshua. They knew they had a choice to make. They said, "We can't serve other gods. It was God who brought us out of

Egypt.” Cue Joshua to point to the group; kids should respond: “We will serve the Lord.”

Joshua warned, “If you leave the Lord and serve other gods, trouble from the Lord will come upon you.” Cue Joshua to point to group; kids respond: “We will serve the Lord.”

“Throw away your pretend gods. You must love only God with all your heart,” Joshua told the people. Cue Joshua to point to group; kids respond: “We will serve the Lord.”

Three times the people promised to serve God. They promised to obey God too. Show *Teaching Picture 4*. **Joshua wrote in a book everything that was said that day. He set a big stone under a tree. “This stone,” Joshua said, “will remind you of your promise to serve God.”**

Bible Review Activity

ASK: **Who can tell what happened on the day God’s people chose to serve Him?** (Joshua reminded the people of everything God had done for them. Joshua told the people that he and his family were going to serve the Lord. The people said they would serve the Lord too.)

SAY: **Let’s play a game and see what else you remember from the Bible story.** Lead in a final round of the Race to the Promised Land game. Show the picture and question cards for lesson 4. Shuffle together the cards for lessons 1-4 and place them facedown in a stack. Use masking tape to mark off a finish line. Explain how the game is played. Form teams. Let the kids play until one team has reached the finish line, or determine which team is closest to the line when it is time to end the game. SAY: **Joshua and God’s people chose to serve Him. ♥ We should choose to serve God too.**

Bible Memory Joshua 24:15

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Write “Joshua 24:15” on the board. Have the children open their Bibles to the table of contents page. Help them find the book of Joshua. Then tell them to turn to Joshua 24:15 in their Bibles. Ask for a volunteer to read the verse.

Review how to do American Sign Language for the word *serve*. Start by sliding one hand forward; move that hand back while sliding the other hand forward. Demonstrate the ASL sign for *Lord*: Form an uppercase *L* with the thumb and pointer finger of the right hand; move the *L* hand from the left shoulder to the right hip. Practice the sign several times. Then say the Bible verse, including the signs for both *serve* and *Lord*. SAY: **Joshua and the people chose to serve the Lord. ♥ We should choose to serve God too.**

Materials

Resources sheet 2 Race to the Promised Land Game
Cards for lessons 1–4, *Resources* CD Unit 1 Review Game printable file (includes game instructions and questions with answers), masking tape



Materials

Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker



Teaching Tip

Teaching sign language can help children understand that we are to communicate God’s Word to all people, including those who have disabilities.

Optional Bible Skill Builder

If you have not already done so, print and use the unit 1 Optional Bible Skills activity. Help kids review the names of the first five books of the Bible. Display the books of the Old Testament poster provided with the *Resources* CD Classroom Tools. Randomly call out names of Old Testament books and let the kids take turns finding the names on the poster.



Focus

♥ We should choose to serve God.

Make It Real (10–15 minutes)

3 Use one of these activities to help children **discover ways to serve God**.

Materials

Activities p. 9, pencils (optional: whiteboard, dry-erase marker)



See the *Resources* CD lesson 4 printable files for another way you can offer this activity.

Materials

Resources sheet 3 Scenes of Service Cards, reusable adhesive (optional: props such as a trash bag, a stack of plates, bulletins, cupcakes, napkins)



Something More!

Keep separate the card that shows a girl delivering cupcakes. After the other scenes have been acted out, show the card. Bring out a plate of cupcakes and allow one child to truly act out the scene, giving each child a treat to enjoy!

Materials

Weekly Bible Reader issue 4



Quick Step Ways to Serve God

SAY: Joshua and God's people chose to serve God. Let's discover some ways we can serve God. Distribute the activity page and pencils. Read the directions, and allow time for children to complete the activity. Note: You may want to duplicate the blank spaces on a whiteboard. As children guess each word, write the word on the board. This will help children who have difficulty with word puzzles.

ASK: How can we serve God through worship? (We can put Him first in our lives. We can invite others to worship with us.)

When is a time you have served God by telling about Him?

When have you served God by sharing what you have?

What are things we can give to people in need?

What are ways you can help others?

SAY: There are so many ways to serve God! ♥ We should choose to serve God every day.

Option Scenes of Service

SAY: Joshua and God's people chose to serve God. Let's discover ways we can serve God. Have the class form small groups. Give each group one of the cards. Note: If you have a small class, cards can be given to individuals or pairs of children. Each group is to talk about how the child or children in its picture is serving God. Then the group can act out what is going on in the picture. Discuss each situation. Display the cards on a wall or bulletin board to serve as reminders of ways to serve God.

ASK: Is this a way you could serve God? Why or why not?

What are some other ways you could serve God? Encourage responses. Give examples of ways you serve God too.

SAY: There are many ways to serve God. ♥ We should choose to serve God every day.

Option Story from Weekly Bible Reader

SAY: Joshua and God's people chose to serve God. Let's discover ways we can serve God. Read the rebus story "Jordan Serves Others." Pause whenever you come to a picture, and let kids call out the pictured word.

ASK: What are some ways Jordan served God? (worked hard, gave to people in need)

What are some ways you can serve God?

SAY: There are lots of ways to serve God. ♥ We should choose to serve God every day!

Live It Out (10 minutes)

- 4** Use one of these activities to help children **choose a way they will serve God.**

Focus

♥ We should choose to serve God.

Quick Step I Will Serve the Lord!

SAY: **We've talked about lots of ways to serve God. Now you get to choose a way you want to serve God.** Be sure each child has an activity page and stickers. Make colored pencils available. Explain that the kids are to create their own personal posters, showing one or more ways they plan to serve God. Allow time for creating the posters. As kids are working, walk around the room. Give suggestions to kids who may be having a difficult time deciding what to draw. Then have the kids bring their completed posters to a closing prayer circle. Ask volunteers to show and talk about their posters.

ASK: **When do you plan to serve God in this way?
Will you need to ask for help with your service project? If so, who will you ask to help you?**

Close with a time of prayer. PRAY: **Dear God, we praise You for always being with us. We know that ♥ we should choose to serve You. Help us as we serve You this week. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Option A Stone Reminder

Have the children gather in a circle. SAY: **Joshua put a large stone under a tree to remind the people of their promise to serve God. A stone can remind us that ♥ we should choose to serve God too.** Show children one of the stones. Tell them that they will pass the stone around the circle. When they get the stone, they are to name a way or ways they choose to serve God. Pray and ask God to help you and the children as you serve Him.

Give each child a stone to take home as a reminder of the child's promise to serve God. Let children use permanent markers to write on the stones specific things they will do to serve God. Or they can simply write "Serve God" on their stones. You may want to put the stones in resealable plastic bags to send home.

Saying Good-bye

- Distribute issue 4 of *Weekly Bible Reader*. Hand out the *Activities* page 2 Unit 1 Bible Memory Poster and stickers if you have not already done so. Make sure children have projects and activity sheets they have done.
- If you have time before parents arrive, use some of the activities on the Additional Activities for Unit 1 page.

Materials

Activities p. 10 and stickers, colored pencils (or markers) (optional: *Resources* sheet 3 Scenes of Service Cards)



See the *Resources* CD lesson 4 printable files for another way you can offer this activity.

Something More!

Plan a class project that will allow everyone to serve God. Use one of the ideas pictured on the Scenes of Service Cards, or choose your own project.

Materials

medium-size stones, permanent markers (optional: resealable plastic bags, old short-sleeve shirts in adult sizes)



Teaching Tip

Provide old shirts kids can wear over their clothes while using permanent markers.

Weekly Bible Reader

Give each student a *Weekly Bible Reader* to take home.

Be sure parents know about the *Faith & Family* pages available online to print and use with their children at home. Go to www.heartshaper.com.

