**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Joshua

### MEETING AIM

To explore how God encouraged Joshua before he led the Israelites on the final leg of their journey into the promised land.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 1

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Joshua followed in the footsteps of seasoned leader Moses and was given the daunting task of guiding the Israelites into the promised land. Just before taking on this role, God’s words of reassurance didn’t focus on Joshua’s gifts, skills or experience, though he no doubt had these. Instead, this passage shows us that above all our abilities, the greatest thing we need to know when we face unknown or difficult situations is that God promises to be with us.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Gather the children together for a time to catch up, build relationships and reflect on the week just gone. Have people share exciting news such as birthdays, trips or events. You might like to use the following question to start conversation as a light-hearted way into today’s theme: “What is the bravest thing you have ever done?”

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** relay batons (these could be made from rolls of newspaper held secure with sticky tape)

Hold a relay race with the children. Split the group into teams and line them up at one end of the room. Provide the first player in each team with a relay baton. On your shout, the first player must run to a marked spot at the other end of the room and back again before passing the baton to their next teammate. Once every team member has run, the team should sit on the floor. The first team to finish is the winner. If you have a small group, you could do this as one team, doing the activity twice and timing each go, challenging them to beat their previous time.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** lining paper; pens

Begin by exploring with the children how God promised Abraham that one day his descendants would live in the promised land (Genesis 15) and how God used Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and towards this land (Exodus 13-14).

Explain to the group that just before he died, Moses ‘passed on the baton’ of being the Israelite leader to Joshua. It’s a bit like a relay race where someone passes on the baton to someone else to run the next part of the race. Moses handed over to Joshua to run the final leg of a very long historical journey. It was Joshua’s job to finish the race and lead the Israelites into the promised land.

Ask the children to shout out words that describe how Joshua might have been feeling when he found out about his task. Give small groups of children a sheet of lining paper each. Encourage them to draw around a person in their group and then draw or write things that they think make a good leader onto the person outline.

When the children have had time to reflect, encourage them to share their ideas. Help them to identify the different themes in their thoughts: are they predominantly skills, talents or experiences? Are they things that anyone can learn or things that some people have and others don’t?

Ask someone to pretend to be a leader like Joshua (this could be a child or leader). Invite the children to share things they might say to encourage them before a big job.

Read Joshua 1:1-9 in a dramatic voice. Explain that this is what God said to Joshua to encourage him at the start of his daunting task. Wonder together what else God could have said to encourage Joshua, and why he might have chosen to say what he did. In your discussions, try to draw out that God didn’t list all of Joshua’s gifts and skills or the qualities he had which made him a good leader, like the ones we came up with earlier. Instead, God told Joshua that he should stay close to him and follow the instructions for living he had given to Moses. He told him to remember to be “brave, strong, bold and courageous” because God would be with him wherever he went.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Use the following questions as prompts for discussion. Encourage the children to think about what the passage might be saying to us and how it could be applied to our everyday lives. Try to encourage wondering, reminding them that there is not necessarily one right answer.

* God had a big job for Joshua to do, but he has jobs for all of us to do every day. What things might God be wanting us to do?
* Joshua had a daunting task and was going into the unknown. Do we have things in our lives that feel a bit like that?
* What might God say to encourage us in the tasks that he has given us, or if we are feeling afraid or nervous?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** old maps or images of maps printed out; pens and scissors

Provide the children with the maps (or pictures of maps). Encourage them to draw around their foot and cut it out. Ask them to copy Joshua 1:9 onto their outline or draw a picture which reminds them of today’s session. As you work, continue your chat about the story. Some children might be worried about situations they are facing, so seek to reassure them that God will be with them. They should take the cut-out home as a reminder that just like God promised to be with Joshua, he promises to be with us too, whatever we face.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** relay baton(s) from ‘Intro activity’

Encourage the children to think or share about situations where they would like God to give them courage. Sit or stand in a circle, and pass the baton around the group. When each child has the baton, they should pray for the person next to them, either aloud or in their head. In a larger group you may need to hand out multiple batons to speed this up.

**EMMA DOBSON**

is an experienced children’s worker from west London.