

Trusting God
encourages and
strengthens us.

Joshua 6:2-20

1 Corinthians 3:19

SESSION SUPPLIES

- ★ Bibles
- ★ a bell
- ★ four large boxes
- ★ gift wrap
- ★ ribbons and bows
- ★ scissors and tape
- ★ paper and markers
- ★ photocopies of the Power Page! (page 53)

TRUST THROUGH TROUBLES

MIGHTY MEMORY VERSE

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5, 6

(For older kids, add in Psalm 25:1, 2: "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God.")

SESSION OBJECTIVES

During this session, children will

- ★ learn that we trust God with our hearts
- ★ realize that faith strengthens us
- ★ discover ways to trust God more
- ★ thank God for his loving help and direction

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Crises of confidence. That's what many men and women of the Bible faced when, in order to follow God's lead, they had to decide whether or not to put their faith in what they couldn't understand. How many of us today would jump at the chance to build a boat of ponderous proportions in our own cities amid taunts and teases, as Noah did? Or who among us wouldn't feel a little silly opening a fish's mouth to look for money, as Peter did? Or which of us wouldn't question the odd set of directives Joshua obeyed without reserve? Confidence and faith in God superseded mere logic in each of these cases, providing us powerful lessons in trusting God's ways with our hearts instead of our understanding.

Every day kids face their own Jerichos—battles that may seem impossible to endure, understand, or conquer. But God wants kids to know that he's there to help them just as he helped Joshua. And although kids may not understand God's ways or will, their faith will grow and strengthen when we encourage them to trust God with their hearts instead of just their logic. Use this lesson to guide kids in discovering that faith goes far beyond what is logical or based on human understanding—it goes right to the heart of the matter!

POWER FOCUS

Place a bell in front of the kids, then choose a volunteer to be the leader. Have the leader stand beside the bell, then say: **Do you think our leader can make this bell ring without touching it in any way?** Pause for responses, then say: **It sounds impossible, doesn't it? But I'm going to help the leader ring the bell without touching it!** Turn to the leader and say: **Let me whisper a few directions in your ear, then you can tell the rest of the kids what they can do to help.**

Whisper the following directions to the leader: "Have everyone jump up three times, then curtsy. Next, have kids tickle their noses as they say 'dilly-dilly-doo' three times."

Have the leader relay this message to the kids and lead them in following the directions. Watch carefully, and if the directions aren't followed exactly or in perfect unison, have them repeat the directions until they're correct. A few repetitions will add to the merriment!

When kids have correctly completed the directions and are tickling their noses, ring the bell. Then say: **Wow! It worked, and the bell rang without you touching it at all! You followed all those directions just right—and look at the results! But I do have a couple of questions for you.** Ask:

- ★ How did it feel to follow the directions?
- ★ Did you think the plan would work? Why or why not?
- ★ Why did you have to repeat the directions a few times?
- ★ In what ways was this activity like following God's directions when we don't quite understand them?

Say: **Sometimes God helps and leads us in ways we might not understand. But because we have faith in God and trust him completely, we follow and obey his directions. Today we'll learn more about finding faith in God and how trusting God can help us in times of trouble or**

worry. We'll review our Mighty Memory Verse, and we'll also discover ways to trust and have even more faith in God. Right now, let's listen to a Bible story about a soldier who followed some very strange directions God gave him!

THE MIGHTY MESSAGE

Place the four large boxes one on top of the other in the center of the room. Gather kids off to one side of the boxes and say: **Our story comes from the book of Joshua in the Old Testament, and it's about Joshua, God's brave soldier. You can help act out the story as I tell it. Just follow my lead!** Retell the story of Joshua at Jericho as you lead kids in the accompanying motions in parentheses.

Joshua and God's people had been given a new land by God. This was the land God had promised Abraham many years before. As they marched across the land (march in place), **they came to a city that was full of people who did not love God** (boo and hiss). **God wasn't happy with this city and wanted to give all its land to his own people** (cheer and clap). **But there was one big problem—a giant wall over ten feet tall surrounded the city** (boo and hiss). **Joshua wondered how they'd ever get over that wall.**

Then God spoke to him. God gave Joshua and his people directions on what to do. First, God told them to march once around the walls for six days with seven priests blowing trumpets. (Have seven children make noises on pretend trumpets and lead the others in a march one time around the box wall.)

Then God told them to march around the city seven times on the seventh day, blowing the trumpets. God told the people to shout on the last blast and the walls would fall. (Have the seven kids lead the others marching around the box wall seven times and making noises on pretend trumpets. On the last round, have them blow the trumpets long, at which point everyone else is to shout and then topple the wall.)

Say: **Wow! The walls came tumbling down, and God's people claimed the city!** (Lead everyone in a round of cheering and clapping.) **Because**

POWER POINTERS

Tell kids there are various ways to know and understand things; two are through logic and through the heart. Point out that God wants us to trust with our hearts, not just our understanding.

Joshua and God's people placed their faith in God, they had the victory at Jericho! Ask:

- ★ How do you think God's people felt when they heard God's surprising directions?
- ★ Why did they faithfully follow God even though they didn't understand his unusual directions?
- ★ What might have happened if Joshua hadn't found faith in God?
- ★ What can we learn from Joshua about faith in God even when we don't understand God's plans?

Say: **Just think of how Joshua and God's people must have felt following God's directions. They probably looked a bit silly to the people of Jericho! But the Bible tells us that what seems wise to people is really foolishness to God.** Read aloud 1 Corinthians 3:19a, then say: **Joshua and God's people probably didn't understand why they were marching and blowing on horns, but they trusted God with all their hearts and followed his directions even when they didn't understand God's plan with their minds. Now that's true faith!** Ask:



- ★ In what ways can we follow God more closely?
- ★ How does our faith show God we love him? trust him?

Say: **True faith is following, obeying, and believing in God even when it seems odd or not logical. And when we place our faith in God, he helps us overcome even the toughest troubles! Let's play a game as we learn more about how God helps us step by step when we place our faith in him.** Save the boxes to use in the game and then for the Super Scripture activity.

Help kids mark Joshua 6 in their Bibles with the blue bookmark ribbons they've been using for several weeks. If anyone has lost or hasn't made a bookmark, let that child make one now using an 8-inch length of blue ribbon and the Bible icon from page 123. Remind children to bring their Bibles and bookmark ribbons next week.



THE MESSAGE IN MOTION

Clear an area in the center of the room and place two of the boxes in a row several feet apart on one side of the room. Then set the other two boxes in the same pattern at the other side of the room.

Have kids form two groups and line up at one end of the room. Instruct kids in each group to find partners, then hand each child two sheets of paper. Explain that in this cooperative game, players can only step on sheets of paper to travel around the boxes to the other end of the room and back. Show how one person can set two sheets of paper on the floor so both partners can step on a paper, then place two more sheets in front and step to those as they pick up the first two sheets. Have kids continue in a steppingstone fashion around the boxes to the opposite end of the room and back. Encourage kids to help each other in this unusual game.



When each pair has returned to the starting place, have kids sit down and ask:

- ★ **What was it like to have someone helping you?**
- ★ **How did it help to trust your partner?**
- ★ **In what ways is this like how God helps us step by step when we have a problem to overcome?**
- ★ **In what ways is faith a step-by-step process and not something we have all at once?**

Say: **Faith often grows in small, steady steps. And when we put our faith and trust in God, our faith becomes stronger each time God helps us solve a problem. That's pretty neat, isn't it? And after many small steps of faith, we discover we have big faith in God!**

One of the best ways to grow strong faith is through God's Word. Let's review the Mighty Memory Verse as we explore more about finding faith in God—even if we don't always understand his ways!

SUPER SCRIPTURE

Ask a volunteer to repeat the Mighty Memory Verse aloud, then choose someone else to repeat the verse. Finally, repeat the verse two times in unison. Have both older and younger kids repeat Proverbs 3:6 along with verse five.

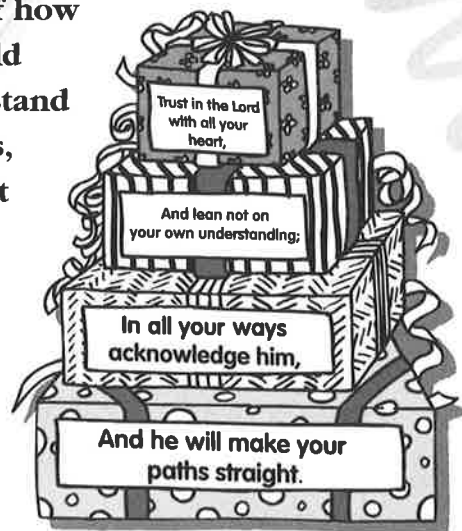
Then say: **Last week we learned that Proverbs 30:5 tells us to do two things: trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding. Now in verse 6 we learn something else we're to do: in all ways acknowledge him. That means in everything we are to look to God for guidance and give God thanks and praise! Verse 6 also tells us something God will do: he will make our paths straight. This means that God will help us overcome troubles and worries. In other words, when we place our faith in God, he will help us! So there are three things we should do and one thing God will do:**

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge him,
And he will make your paths straight.***

Repeat the verses once more and have kids hold their fingers up for the three things we're to do. If you have time, invite groups of four to repeat the three things we're to do and the one thing God will do for us.

Then form four groups and hand each group a box. Invite kids to cover four sides of their boxes with festive gift wrap, ribbons, and bows. Then have each group write one of the four Scripture portions on one of the uncovered sides of the box. (You may need to help younger kids with this.) Box one will read, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart," and box two will have, "And lean not on your own understanding." Box three will say, "In all your ways acknowledge him," and box four will read, "And he will make your paths straight."

As kids work, say: **Joshua and the people trusted God with all their hearts and not their understanding. Think of how surprised they must have been when God told them what to do! I'm sure they didn't understand why God wanted them to march, blow horns, and shout to tumble a wall. But imagine what might have happened if they had said, "That doesn't make any sense; we won't do it!" Instead, Joshua and God's people believed in God with all their hearts and they obeyed. We can be like Joshua and have faith in God with all our hearts in everything we do.**



When the boxes are finished, have each group read their portion of the verse as you assemble the boxes to make a wall. If there's time, march around the wall as you clap and repeat Proverbs 3:5, 6. Keep the boxes to use in next week's lesson.

Say: **God promised to help Joshua when he was at Jericho facing those big, troublesome walls, and God promises to help us with any big troubles that we face, too. Let's share a prayer thanking God for his powerful, trustworthy help.**

A POWERFUL PROMISE

Gather kids in front of the Scripture boxes you just assembled, then quietly say: **We've learned that God helps us when we trust him with our troubles. We've discovered that we might not always understand God's ways but that we're to faithfully trust him with all our hearts. Finally, we've worked on the Mighty Memory Verse, which says** (pause and encourage kids to repeat the verse with you), **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5, 6."**

Hold up the Bible and say: **We can trust God's promise to love and help us. Now let's make a promise of our own to God. We can each promise to follow and obey God more closely this week—even if we don't understand or agree with his ways. As we pass the Bible around the circle, we can say, "I want to follow you with all my heart, Lord."** Pass the Bible until everyone has had a chance to make a promise.

Say: **Let's thank God by praying his Word. We'll use Proverbs 3:5, 6 as our prayer and use our Scripture boxes to help. Let's place our hands on each box as we pray God's Word.** Place your hands on box one and pray: **Dear Lord, we want to trust in you with all our hearts** (place hands on box two) **and lean not on our own understanding.** (Place hands on box three.) **Lord, in all our ways we acknowledge you,** (place hands on box four) **and we thank you for making our paths straight. Amen.**

End with this responsive good-bye:

Leader: **May God's faithful help be with you.**

Children: **And also with you!**

Distribute the Power Page! take-home papers as kids are leaving. Thank kids for coming and encourage them to keep their promises to God this week.

POWER PAGE!

Recipe for Trust

Read in what order God commanded Joshua and his people to march around Jericho. Fill in the missing numbers to complete this recipe for victory through trust!

March as follows:

Appoint ____ priests with ____ horns (Joshua 6:4). On the ____th day, march around the city ____ times (Joshua 6:4). You'll hear ____ long blasts on the horns (Joshua 6:5). Then have all the people shout, and the wall will **FALL!**

Have a Heart!

Shade in only the letters found in the word *trust*. You'll discover how we trust God!

M	L	C	A	P	V	B	E	G	F
Y	X	N	U	R	N	U	S	P	O
A	P	R	X	P	T	Q	B	S	N
J	L	T	X	O	F	I	C	T	D
B	C	S	D	B	P	E	K	R	J
M	A	T	N	B	O	L	A	S	M
F	X	U	D	A	Z	B	X	U	V
G	Z	G	S	R	L	R	T	Z	K
A	K	C	E	I	U	N	X	C	J

Draw arrows to place the words in their correct positions to complete the Mighty Memory Verse. The first word has been done for you.

Lord with heart understanding

Trust in the _____ all your _____

_____ and _____ on _____

own _____; in all your _____

_____ him, _____ he _____

make _____ paths _____.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

your will straight and

learn
Trust
acknowledge

your
not
ways