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The Day of Atonement

Scripture: Leviticus 16:1-34

Theme: Sin requires a sacrifice -- and God provides it

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

The Bible tells us about The Day of Atonement. This story shows us that sin requires a sacrifice -- and God provides it. God was faithful to His people, and He is faithful to us today.

Bible Story

Joshua and the Promised Land , Be Strong and Courageous

Long ago, when Moses was very old, God called his friend Joshua. Moses had been God's leader for forty years, guiding the Israelites through the desert and leading them to the land God promised them. But now, Moses knew he couldn't lead them anymore. So God said to Joshua, "Moses is dead, and I have chosen you to take his place. Now, be strong and courageous, just as I have been with you before. I will never leave you, and I will always be with you, even in this new journey."

Joshua felt nervous at first. He wondered how he would lead such a big group of people into the land God had given them. But God gave him a special promise: "Do not be afraid, for I will be with you wherever you go. I will take care of you, just as I took care of Moses." This meant Joshua could trust God, even if things looked difficult. God also gave him instructions for the future, like taking care of the people, sharing God's word, and obeying Him no matter what. God wanted Joshua to remember that He was always there to help him.

The Israelites had been waiting for this moment for many years. When Joshua stood at the border of the promised land, he had to remember God's promise to never leave him. Even when they faced challenges, like battles or hard choices, they could rely on God. Joshua's job was not to be perfect, but to trust God and do what He had told him to do. Just like Joshua, we can also be strong and brave when we trust God. Sometimes, we might feel afraid, but God promises to be with us too!

This story shows us that God never gives us too much to handle alone. When we follow His instructions and trust Him, He will always help us. Just like Joshua, we can be brave in our faith and know that God is with us every step of the way. What is one way you can trust God today?

Key Verse

Leviticus 16:34

God is Always with You! This verse from Joshua tells us that God is like a super-strong friend who never leaves us. When we feel scared or unsure, just remember: God says, "Don't be afraid, He's right there with you!" That means even if you're doing something new or feeling nervous, like jumping into a pool for the first time or asking a grown-up for help, God is cheering you on and helping you. God's presence is like having a personal bodyguard. Imagine if your favorite superhero always stood beside you, ready to protect you and give you courage, even if you felt small or alone. Joshua knew this, and he trusted God enough to face big challenges, like leading the Israelites to their new land. The same God who gave Joshua courage is the same God who loves you! He's the same today, waiting to help you when you need it. What does this mean for you? God wants you to be brave, just like Joshua. Maybe today you're feeling scared about something, like telling a new friend your name, asking to join in a game, or even just trying something new at school. Instead of thinking, "What if I mess up?" try saying to yourself: "God is with me, so I can do this!" When you feel nervous, take a deep breath and remember: God's love is stronger than your fear. He'll guide you, just like a light in the dark! You don't have to be perfect to be brave. Joshua faced tough challenges because he trusted God, and so can you! Maybe your "tough moment" today is something small, like picking up your toys without being asked or sharing your crayons with a friend. That's how brave people start! God sees your good heart, and He's proud of you for trying. Keep going, and remember: "The Lord your God is with you!" A Simple Way to Remember: Imagine God is wearing a big, warm blanket around you. Even if you feel cold or shaky, that blanket is always there to keep you safe and warm. When you feel scared, hold onto that blanket, it's God's promise that He's right beside you! Practice saying this with your family: "God is with me, so I can be brave." It's okay to ask God for help when you need it too, He loves you and wants you to feel strong!

Activities

Activity 1:

Kids color and label a simple map of the Promised Land while learning about God's promises to Joshua. They'll practice identifying key elements (river, mountains, fields) and apply courage by "mapping out their own faith journey."

1. Introduce the Story (2 min): Read Joshua 1:1-9 aloud. Ask: "How did God promise to help Joshua?" (Answer: He said, "Be strong and courageous!")
2. Map Activity (5 min): Hand each child a map. Have them color the land green (fertile fields), blue (river), and brown (mountains). Glue labels in the correct places.
3. Label & Reflect (5 min): Have kids write or draw one promise God gave them (e.g., "God will always protect me") on their map. Pair-share: "What's one thing God has promised you?"

Activity 2:

Kids create 3D dioramas using supplies to show Joshua facing his fears, just like God encourages him. They'll practice listening to God's voice through role-play.

Supplies needed:

- Set up tables with supplies. Show a picture of Joshua leading the Israelites.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6, 8) based on Joshua 1:1, 9, "Be Strong and Courageous." These questions encourage them to reflect on the story, think about their own experiences, and apply God's encouragement to their lives.
- 1. What did God tell Joshua to do before he led the Israelites into the Promised Land?
- How can God tell you something important to do in your own life?
- (Example: If God says, "Be strong and brave," what might that mean for you when you're scared or facing a big challenge, like trying something new, sharing your feelings, or standing up for what's right? How can you ask God for help, just like Joshua did?)
- 2. Why do you think the Israelites were afraid before Joshua led them? What were they probably thinking or feeling?
- How can we be brave when we're nervous about something?
- (Example: Maybe they were afraid of the big cities or unknown lands ahead. What are some things you might feel scared about, like a new school, a big test, or a friend who's different? How can you remember God's promise to be with you, like He was with Joshua? What would help you feel braver?)
- 3. Joshua said, "If the Lord our God is with us, why should we fear?" What does this mean?
- How can we trust God when we're afraid?
- (Example: God didn't just give Joshua words, He also gave him His presence. What does it mean to have God's strength and courage in your life? When have you felt God's help before? How can you pray to trust Him more, like Joshua did, when you're worried or unsure? What's one thing you can ask God to be with you today?)
- 4. Joshua told the people to "choose to love the Lord your God and obey His commands," and then God said, "I will be with you."
- What does it mean to love and obey God? How can we do that every day?
- (Example: God doesn't just want us to do things perfectly, He wants us to try our best and trust Him. What's one way you can show love and obedience to God this week, like reading His Bible, praying, or helping someone? How can God's promise to be with you help you stay strong, even when you mess up? What's one small step you can take today to follow Him?)
- These questions invite kids to share their thoughts, relate the story to their own lives, and reflect on how God's promises can encourage them to be brave, courageous, and obedient! Would you like any of these adjusted for a specific lesson focus?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: Being Strong and Courageous Like Joshua Dear God, Thank You for sending Joshua to lead our people into the Promised Land. Just like Joshua trusted You and had faith, we want to trust You every day. Even when things feel big or scary, help us to be brave and courageous, just like Joshua was. Teach us to remember You are always with us, guiding and protecting us. You gave Joshua a clear mission: "Be strong and courageous." Lord, we know that sometimes we might feel afraid, like Joshua's people felt when they looked at those giant walls. But You promised to be our strength. Help us to listen to You and do what You ask, even if it feels hard. Remind us that You are always there to help us. Today, we ask for courage to face new challenges in school, with friends, and in our families. Just like Joshua knew he could rely on You, help us to trust You more every day. Give us the strength to stand up for what's right and to believe in You, no matter what. Thank You for loving us and leading us, just like Joshua knew You would. Help us to be strong in You, so we can share Your courage with others. Amen!

Application for Kids (short reflection): "What did Joshua do to feel strong? He remembered God's promises and took one step at a time. Can you think of a time you felt brave like Joshua? Maybe it was when you asked for help, or when you tried something new, just like Joshua trusted God!"

>> Missions Spotlight

The Karenni people of Myanmar have been displaced from their homeland for decades. Missionaries working in refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border share Joshua's story to encourage displaced believers that God keeps His promises even in exile.

-> To the Cross

God told Joshua, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.' God always keeps His promises. Jesus gives us an even greater promise: 'Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matthew 28:20). Our true Promised Land is eternal life with Him.