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# Joshua and Jericho

*Scripture: Joshua 1:1-18; 6:1-27*

**Theme: When God commands, obedience brings victory**

*Jr High (Ages 12-14)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Joshua and Jericho tell a powerful story of faith and obedience in the face of impossible challenges. God calls Joshua to lead His people into the Promised Land, promising him success, protection, and victory, not because of his own strength, but through complete trust in Him. After decades of wandering in the wilderness, Israel arrives at the gates of Jericho, a fortified city controlled by the Canaanite king, who mocks their numbers. Though the people hesitate, Joshua is given a clear command: take the city by faith, not force. God assures Joshua that He will give the city into their hands, and He provides a specific strategy: march around the city seven times, blowing the trumpets, and the walls will fall at the seventh circuit. The obedience of the people, including the children, women, and foreigners, is critical. When they follow God's instructions precisely, the walls crumble under their feet, and the city is captured without a single casualty. This event serves as a dramatic display of God's power and the consequences of disobedience, reinforcing the theme that His commands are not arbitrary but designed for our good and His glory. Beyond the historical account, Joshua and Jericho offer timeless lessons about real-life faith and obedience. The command to take Jericho by faith mirrors modern challenges where success depends not on our own efforts but on trusting God's promises. Just as Joshua's obedience led to victory, believers today must trust God's guidance in uncertain situations, whether in leadership, relationships, or personal struggles. The story also exposes the danger of doubt and half-hearted faith; when people hesitated, God's power was limited. Conversely, when they acted on His word, even in what seemed impossible, the outcome was guaranteed. For juniors in this age group, this lesson invites reflection on how obedience to God's commands, whether in prayer, obedience to authority, or standing firm in faith, can bring breakthroughs and triumph over adversity. The key takeaway is that God's victory is always tied to our willingness to follow His lead, proving that obedience is not just a moral requirement but a pathway to seeing His promises fulfilled.

## Bible Story

The Israelites had spent 40 years wandering in the desert after leaving Egypt, and now they were finally ready to take their first big step into the Promised Land. God had promised Abraham and his descendants that this land, filled with cities, rivers, and green valleys, was theirs, but the people had been too scared to trust Him. That's when God called Joshua, Moses' trusted leader, to take over. "I'm with you, Joshua," God told him. "I'll be right beside you, just like I was with Moses. Never fear, this is your job, and I'll see you through." Joshua was overjoyed but also nervous. "What about all the big, strong cities?" he asked. God's reply was simple: "No one will stand against you. I'll give these people into your hands, like a big, giant snack!"

Jericho, the first city on the border of the Promised Land, was a bustling city full of fearsome people. The walls were so tall and strong that even Joshua's army would have struggled to climb them with swords alone. But God had a plan: He told Joshua to march around the city once every day for six days, blowing trumpets and shouting. On the seventh day, they were to do it one last time, but this time, everyone, including women, children, and even animals, was to join in. Then, at the sound of the trumpets, they were to shout so loud the walls would collapse. At first, Joshua's men wondered why they were doing this strange ritual, but they obeyed. When the seventh day came, the people shouted so hard their voices cracked and echoed off the mountains. Suddenly, the walls trembled, then crashed down, like a giant, wooden tower falling at the sound of a trumpet! The people rushed inside, and God had delivered the city as promised. The walls weren't just wood and stone, they were built on fear, and God wanted to break that fear so His people could move forward.

After Jericho fell, Joshua's army did something even bolder: they burned the city. The Bible says they killed everyone, men, women, and children, who had been living in the city. They didn't just take the land; they made sure no one else could use it. But here's the tricky part: this story feels a little harsh for kids today. Joshua's army was following God's instructions, but was this really fair? Some people might ask: "What about the families who didn't fight back?" Or "Why did God make them pay for their sins?" The truth is, this was a time when God's people were still learning how to live in the land without trusting other nations. Jericho was a reminder that sometimes, to win, you have to make sure no one else has a chance to win too. Still, Joshua's victory was a big deal, it proved God could work through big, scary situations. And for the first time in a long time, the Israelites felt like they could finally take control of their own future.

What's the real-life lesson here? First, God doesn't need your strength, He gives it to you. Jericho's walls were built on fear, but God wanted His people to trust Him. That's why He gave Joshua the power to win without even lifting a sword. Today, when we feel small or afraid, God still says the same thing: "Don't be afraid, I'm with you." Second, sometimes victory comes in unexpected ways. The Israelites didn't just climb the walls, they marched around it, shouted, and trusted God to do the work. That's how we grow: by following God's plan, even when it's strange or hard. And third, trust isn't just about winning, it's about how we use what we've won. Jericho was a warning: if we don't live right, we can't just take what we want. Joshua's people had to learn to live in the land with God's people, not against them. So next time you're afraid or tempted to take something that isn't yours, remember: God's promises are bigger than the walls we build on fear.

## Key Verse

**Joshua 1:9**

## Activities

### Activity 1:

Students explore how Joshua's teamwork and faith led to victory, then apply it to real-life partnerships. They'll build a symbolic "wall" and discuss how unity strengthens communities.

### Activity 2:

Students role-play Joshua's confrontation with Jericho's fear, then solve a modern "Jericho moment" (e.g., bias, procrastination). They'll use dramatic questioning and creative problem-solving.

## Discussion Questions

- **Faith in Action:** Joshua was told by God to lead the Israelites into battle against Jericho. The city was strong and fortified with walls, but God promised victory. How do you think Joshua and the people felt when they first heard this? Why might God have chosen this moment to show His power? How can we apply this to our own lives when we face challenges that seem impossible?
- **Obedience and Trust:** In Joshua 6:1-5, God instructed the Israelites to march around Jericho seven times for seven days, then blow the trumpets and shout. Why do you think God gave such a strange command? What does this teach us about trusting God's plan, even when it doesn't make sense? Have you ever had to trust God in a way that seemed unusual or hard to understand? How did it feel?
- **Fear vs. Faith:** The Israelites were afraid of Jericho's walls and the people inside. But Joshua told them not to be afraid because God was with them. How do you think fear can sometimes make us doubt God's promises? Have you ever felt afraid in a situation where you knew God was leading you? What helped you trust Him?
- **Sacrifice and Trust:** In Joshua 6:27, the Israelites were told to put the city's people to death, including the women, children, and animals. This seems harsh by human standards. Why do you think God commanded this? How can we trust God's plan even when it involves hard choices? What does this teach us about following God's will, even if it's uncomfortable?
- **Victory and Repentance:** After Jericho fell, the people destroyed everything inside. Later, the Israelites saw Rahab, a woman who helped them, and she was saved. Rahab's story shows that God can use anyone, even those who seem unworthy. How can we apply this to our own lives? When we see someone who doesn't follow God but still has good intentions, how should we respond? How can we show kindness to those who don't understand?

## Prayer Focus

*Dear Lord, Help us trust You when You speak, like Joshua did when He told Jericho to be silent. When we follow Your commands with faith, we know You bring victory in every step, just like You did for Joshua and the people of Israel. Amen.*

### >> Missions Spotlight

The story of Joshua and Jericho reveals God's power to break down walls, both physical (the walls of Jericho) and spiritual (the hearts of people). When faith in God's promises transforms lives, it opens doors for mission work, proving that even in impossible situations, His love can reach the unreached, leading to the salvation and reconciliation of nations.

### -> To the Cross

"The Wall Falls Down" Just as Joshua and the Israelites trusted God to deliver them from Jericho's strong walls, we trust Jesus to break down every barrier in our lives. When we surrender our hearts to Him, His power moves in ways we never imagined, freeing us from sin and bringing peace into our lives!