



May 21
The Defeat of Ai
3rd-5th

Big Picture Question: What does God do when we obey Him? God blesses people who obey Him in faith.

Bible Passage: Joshua 8

Christ Connection: Joshua was a representation of Christ, leading the Israelites to victory in overcoming Canaan as Jesus leads us to victory in overcoming the world.

TEACHER BIBLE STUDY

The Israelites' battle with the men of Ai (AY igh) was fresh in their minds. Achan sinned after the conquering of Jericho, and God was not with the Israelites in battle against Ai. They had run away, scared. Thirty-six of them died. Joshua and the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and buried them beneath a large pile of stones as God commanded. These memorial stones reminded the people what we read in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death."

God gave the Israelites another chance. God helped them destroy Jericho; now He would help them destroy Ai—except this time God allowed them to plunder the city, keeping goods and livestock for themselves. God was going to give them victory!

Joshua sent a group of men to hide in wait behind the city. The rest of the men approached Ai. The king of Ai saw them coming and sent all of his men out to fight them. Israel retreated into the wilderness, and the men of Ai followed. The city was completely unprotected. Joshua raised his sword toward Ai, and the men in hiding ambushed the city. Joshua and his men turned and defeated the men of Ai. Then Joshua burned the city to the ground.

After their victory, Joshua built an altar to the Lord. They offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings. Joshua read the book of the law to the people.

God's presence with Israel was tied directly to their obedience to Him. Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, God is always with us, and we are victorious over our enemies of sin and death. Because of our faith and trust in Jesus, we have right standing with God.

THE BIBLE STORY

The Defeat of Ai Joshua 8

God said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take all of your men with you and go up to attack Ai. I will give you victory over the king of Ai, all of the people, the city, and its land. You may keep all of the livestock and possessions for yourselves.”

God told Joshua to set up an ambush behind the city. So Joshua selected 30,000 men. He sent them out at night to lie in wait behind the city. Joshua told them to be ready to attack Ai. Joshua had a plan: The rest of the army would go with him toward the city. “When they come out against us,” Joshua said, “we will run away like we did before. We will lead them away from the city, then the ambush will take over the city. Then we will set the city on fire!” It was the perfect plan.

Joshua told the people to obey God’s commands for attacking the city. Early the next morning, Joshua and his men went out toward the city. The king of Ai saw them and sent his men out to fight them. When the enemy army got near, Joshua and the Israelites ran away. They pretended to be afraid. The army of Ai followed them. Both armies moved away from the city of Ai. The people of Ai had no idea that Joshua had thousands of men hiding on the other side of the city. The army of Ai left the city completely unprotected.

God said to Joshua, “Hold your sword in your hand toward Ai, for I will hand the city over to you.” So Joshua held out his sword. The men hiding in wait overtook the city. They set the city on fire. The men of Ai saw that the city was burning. The Israelites stopped running away and turned to fight the army of Ai. Israel’s enemies realized they were trapped! The Israelites had moved in on both sides of them. The men of Ai had no way to escape. All the people of Ai were struck down. The Israelites took for themselves the livestock and all the goods in the city, as God had told them to do.

At that time Joshua built an altar to the Lord, just as Moses had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what was written in the book of the law, which Moses wrote down. The Israelites sacrificed offerings to God. Joshua read aloud the words of the law. Everyone heard all of the laws that Moses had commanded—from the women to the little children to the foreigners who were with them.

Christ Connection: The Israelites were under a covenant in which their obedience was directly related to God’s presence with them. We are under a new covenant through Jesus Christ, who took the punishment for our sin on Himself. Because of Christ, we are in right standing with God. We are victorious over our enemies because of our faith in Christ. (Romans 8:37)

BIBLE STORY REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS [about 15 min]

Review the timeline. Remind kids of the Israelites' experience the first time they tried to conquer Ai. Forms pairs or trios. Assign each group a Scripture reference. Groups will form a freeze frame or statue pose based on the Scripture. The other kids will guess which part of the story is being depicted. After every team has had a turn, lead the kids to stand in the correct order of the Bible story and form their freeze frames once more.

Suggested Scripture references:

- Joshua 8:3 – Joshua sent troops to attack Ai.
- Joshua 8:14 – The king of Ai went out to fight.
- Joshua 8:15 – The Israelites pretended to retreat.
- Joshua 8:18 – Joshua held out his sword.
- Joshua 8:19 – The Israelites ambushed Ai.
- Joshua 8:22 – The people of Ai were trapped.
- Joshua 8:30 – Joshua built an altar to the Lord.
- Joshua 8:34 – Joshua read the words of the law.

Say: “*What does God do when we obey Him? God blesses people who obey Him in faith.*”

•Because of Christ, we are in _____ standing with God. (Because of Christ, we are in right standing with God. We are victorious over our enemies because of our faith in Christ. [Romans 8:37])

PRAYER STATION [about 15 min]

We really desire for kids to learn to pray, so we have created activities to go along with different aspects of prayer. Choose a Prayer Station box and walk through the activity with the kids. Each will have a set of instructions or “Teacher Card” for you to talk with the kids about as you do the prayer activity and pray with your group of kids. If you find it helpful, you can always split your group up between both volunteers to provide a smaller group for a more meaningful prayer time.

Remember, kids are learning to pray by your example. The importance and energy you put into prayer will be directly reflected in your class!

KEY PASSAGE/ BIBLE MEMORY TIME [about 10 min]

It is our desire for the kids to begin to hide God's Word in their hearts, so we would like the kids to work on memorizing the Key Passage for the Unit, other verses in the Bible and the Books of the Bible. Tickets will be rewarded for memorization, as well as bringing Bibles to church. Tickets will be used in a drawing at the end of each Unit.

Choose any of the following activities to start the fun! (Award tickets as you see fit!)

- Have kids work on the key passage in fun ways (say it loud, soft, jumping up and down, with motions, etc. Any way to make it come alive!)
- Have kids look through the Key Passage Notebook to review and state for memory past key passages.
- Have kids look up Key Passages and highlight them in their Bibles.
- Play Bible Drill Games. Call out a book of the Bible and the first to locate it wins!
- Allow kids to put the books of the Bible in order. (Game materials provided)
- Challenge kids to memorize new verses and retell them to you from memory!

Be creative and get the kids into God's Word!

SINK IN ACTIVITY [about 10-15 min each] (Choose one or both!)

Activity #1: Pat, pat, clap, clap

Guide kids to sit in a circle and create a rhythm with you. Create a rhythm by patting your legs twice and clapping your hands together twice. Maintain a pat, pat, clap, clap pattern as you play. As you continue the pattern, allow kids to take turns naming one way God has blessed them. Offer your own suggestion last. If a kid hasn't mentioned God sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross, be sure to mention it. To make the game more complicated, ask each kid to name all the previous answers before providing her answer.

Say: "The Israelites faced another battle in today's Bible story as they worked to conquer the promised land. ***What does God do when we obey Him? God blesses people who obey Him in faith.***"

••Because of Christ, we are in _____ standing with God. (Because of Christ, we are in right standing with God. We are victorious over our enemies because of our faith in Christ. [Romans 8:37])

Activity #2: Balloon Battle

Prior to class, write some of God's blessings on small slips of paper and drop each paper inside a balloon. Inflate the balloons. For an extra challenge, inflate some balloons without paper inside. Tape a line down the room. Form two groups. When you give the signal, groups may pop as many balloons as possible to collect the slips of paper. Once the kids pop all the balloons, ask each group to read the Scripture reference provided and share what blessing the verse describes.

Suggested blessing verses:

- Psalm 21:6 (God's presence, joy)
- Psalm 46:1 (help in times of trouble, strength)
- Psalm 54:4 (God's help)
- Psalm 68:19 (salvation, bearing our burdens)
- Psalm 84:11 (grace, glory, and good)
- Psalm 94:19 (comfort, joy)
- John 3:16 (love, eternal life)
- John 14:27 (peace)
- Ephesians 1:7 (redemption, forgiveness)
- 1 Peter 2:10 (mercy)

Say: "To bless someone is to provide someone with something good. God provided the Israelites with a victory in today's Bible story because they obeyed Him in faith. What does God do when we obey Him? ***God blesses people who obey Him in faith.***"

****THE HANDOFF****

As children are picked up, briefly state one of the things that were talked about in class today. You can do this by asking the child a question in front of their parent, or remind them of something they learned.

Christ at home!

Supplies Needed: balloons with blessing verses written inside on slips of paper (leave some balloons empty)