

Lesson 1: Testament of Faith

<p>JOSHUA PROFILE</p> 	<p>Genre: Narrative History</p> <p>Author: Traditionally, Joshua</p> <p>Passage: Joshua 2:1-22</p> <p>Where Is It: The sixth book of the Old Testament: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges</p> <p>Key Characters: Yahweh, Joshua, the people of Israel</p> <p>Main Plot: Joshua is concerned about entering and obtaining the promised land of God. The “land” that God promised is one of the central events in Joshua.</p>
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 **THE WORD**
Joshua 2:1-22

 **ENGAGE THE WORD**
Lesson Overview: Cultural Dimension

Your students are at a pivotal time in their development. In these early adolescent years, they are going to start to understand what it means to make decisions that cause negative consequences. Some of these may be small, while others may be life changing. One thing that students need to learn is that it is never too late for God to change their lives.

Rahab is an example of this. While middle school students probably won't be able to relate to the idea of being a prostitute, they are most likely beginning to experiment with pushing moral boundaries. When that happens and they get in trouble, kids begin to feel like they aren't worthy to follow Christ. The guilt they feel over their decisions tells them that they aren't good enough. It's good to talk about Rahab because her past doesn't prevent God from using her for God's greatness.

Biblical Commentary

Rahab converts after the parting of the Red Sea, and she becomes famous among Hebrew women. While Rahab may be an innkeeper, we know her as a prostitute. Yet, despite this, God still uses her for greatness, illustrating that any one of us can be used to glorify God's kingdom. Rahab is most known for her faith and trust but is also a great image of restoration. Not only does she have faith that God will keep her safe from harm, she places trust in the people she hides.



Wesleyan Snapshot
Redemption

“It means being loosed from bondage or slavery, the ‘buying back’ (literally) of something lost or sold. In the Old Testament, the person charged with responsibility of being a redeemer (go’el) was usually the next of kin. This imagery plays a prominent role in Isaiah 40-55, where Yahweh is repeatedly called Israel’s go’el (see Isaiah 41:14; 43:1; 44:6; 47:4). [In the Old Testament,] redemption is the Exodus.”

—H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*



THE MAIN IDEA

RAHAB TEACHES OUR STUDENTS THAT IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO FOLLOW CHRIST AND START LIVING FOR HIM.

In Joshua 2, we are introduced to Rahab when she hides Joshua's spies from the king of Jericho. "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land" (v. 3b), the king orders Rahab. She lies and tells the king the men left and steers the king in the wrong direction. She shows courage, since the penalty will surely be death if she is caught.

In verses 8-11, we hear Rahab's confession of faith. She validates what God is doing, and we hear from her firsthand—her loyalty is to God, not Canaan. Her people worship many idols and gods. Her declaration is huge because she declares that she is no longer going to worship other gods but the one true God instead.

We also learn in this passage that Rahab's involvement is crucial because she participates in God's plan for Joshua. A prostitute—who has been used and abused by others for evil—is used by God for God's overarching plan of redemption. God redeems sinners for a purpose greater than themselves. This mirrors the work we see Jesus do throughout his life: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17b). In this passage, we see a sinner become righteous.

Rahab is considered righteous for her work in Canaan (James 2:25). In fact, Rahab marries Salmon, has a son, Boaz, and becomes the great-grandmother of King David. She is part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ! God brings her into the family of redemption. A lowly prostitute has a great part to play in the life of the one true redemption for all humanity—Jesus Christ.

It's an interesting picture of redemption painted in these verses. In Joshua 2:17-21, Rahab is instructed to tie a scarlet cord through her window as a symbol to the spies. The red cord grants her safety from the destruction the rest of the city faces; this red marker could be interpreted as a symbol for the blood of the Passover lamb, when God struck the firstborn children in Egypt. Early churches believed the red rope was a symbol of Christ's atonement. It is fitting, then, that a prostitute would be saved by such a cord, both physically and spiritually foreshadowing the atonement and redemption through God in Christ.

REFLECT ON THESE THEMES:

In what ways have you seen God's work of redemption in your life?

Rahab didn't have to trust the spies to honor their word, but she did. Do you fully trust anyone? How has trusting God saved your life?

REFLECT ON YOUR STUDENTS:

Who among your students has seen redemption? How can you encourage your students to fully submit to God?

How can we show our faith through action, like Rahab?

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

**LESSON
OUTLINE**



Main Idea: *Rahab teaches our students that it is never too late to follow Christ and start living for him.*

Resources: *Bibles, copies of handout, writing utensils, poster board or whiteboard/markers, red cord*

Connect to My Experience:
Welcome and Prayer
Sardines Game

Connect to the Word:
Read and Reflect on Joshua 2:1-22
Machine Gun Preacher Story

Connect to My Life and the World: *Discuss the Significance of Influence*

Closing: *The Lord's Prayer*



CONNECT TO MY EXPERIENCE

Student Goal: Youth will understand how it feels to be a spy, so they can connect more closely to the story of Rahab.

“Confession is a difficult discipline for us, because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners. We feel that everyone else has advanced so far into holiness that we are isolated and alone in our sin.”

—Richard J. Foster,
Celebration of Discipline

“From a Christian perspective, a trinitarian hermeneutic is the right, truthful way to read Scripture and is the way that will yield a truthful understanding of the Old Testament.”

—Craig G. Bartholomew and David J.H Beldman,
Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address

Open in prayer.

SARDINES GAME

Play a round of Sardines. Pick one person to hide and turn off all lights. It's best if you have access to multiple rooms. After a few minutes, send the rest of the group to spread out and find the person hiding. Once someone finds the person hiding, they join that person in hiding. The last person to find the group of hidden people is the next person to hide.

SAY: Okay, so it's not a spy mission, but the game of Sardines is somewhat relevant to our topic today. Rahab was a prostitute, and she risked her life hiding a few of Joshua's spies.

ASK the first person who hid: Before someone found you, was it scary being left in the dark? How hard was it to stay hidden when you heard someone walking by?

ASK the rest of the group: What was it like trying to find everyone? What motivated you to look for them?

SAY: The Bible is filled with stories of spies, espionage, and war. Our lesson today is about a woman who saved two spies and, as a result, was a part of God's big plan for his people.

CREATIVE OPTION: IT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

Have the students read Joshua 2:1-22. Ask students to write key words from the passage on a poster board or whiteboard. Have students write a rap song about Rahab and the spies using these key words. You may start with a bunch of words and keep condensing the list until you have the key points in a short verse.

CREATIVE OPTION: SINNER'S PRAYER

Rahab hung a scarlet cord out her window so everyone in her house would be saved. Some scholars believe this cord is symbolic of the blood that Jesus shed for us and a sign of redemption for our sins.

Pass out red cords to everyone. Have them braid the pieces into a rope. While doing so, ask them to pray over their sins from the past. As they work on their ropes individually, they may choose to pray the Sinner's Prayer: *Forgive me, Lord, for I am a sinner. Have mercy on me.*

Ask them to hang their braided ropes somewhere prominent and pray the Sinner's Prayer during the week as a reminder that God forgives us of our sins and doesn't hold them against us.

**CONNECT TO THE WORD**

Student Goal: Youth will know that they are still called to follow God, even though they are guilty of past sins and transgressions.

READ Joshua 2:1-22. After the passage is read, discuss the following.

ASK: Why do you think Rahab hid the spies?

SAY: Rahab was a prostitute, which was considered a sin. But Rahab was blown away by the work God did in Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea, so she decided to follow God. This is huge because the people in her city worshiped many different gods and idols. She was making a declaration that she believed in the God of Israel.

ASK: Do you believe God really can use anyone to do his will despite that person's past? Would you want to be judged based on the things you have done in your past?

MACHINE GUN PREACHER STORY

SAY: I'd like to share a story with you about a man named Sam Childers. He grew up in the hills of Pennsylvania. His parents were decent, honest people, but at an early age, Sam started to get in trouble. By his early teen years, Sam was involved in fighting, drug



Facilitator Note:

Whenever you ask your students a question, always ask yourself first. Are you leading by example? Are you living in such a way that your students want to imitate you as you imitate Christ? Always carry the burden that you are willing to give to others. Jesus criticized the teachers of his day for asking the people to carry burdens they themselves were not willing to carry. Practice what you preach.

Further Explanation

This lesson is anchored in and supported by the grace of God. God’s grace is stronger than any sin that people have done. This lesson might bring up serious issues, but God’s grace is more than sufficient.

dealing, and sleeping around. He became more and more violent and even became a Shotgunner—an armed guard for drug dealers. During this time, he met a stripper named Lynn who would later become his wife.

Despite his choices, Sam always had a fear in the back of his mind that his life choices would end in his own demise. Slowly, he began to distance himself from his life of crime and became an honest man as a construction worker. Although he was still using drugs and abusing alcohol, he held a steady job. Meanwhile, his wife Lynn found a connection again with church.

Over time, Sam reconnected with God and his life began to change for the better. Lynn gave birth to a healthy baby girl, and Sam started his own construction business. But they had no idea that their greatest challenge was just around the corner. (If your students would like to learn more about Sam’s life, they can do so here: [http://www.machine-gunpreacher.org/.](http://www.machine-gunpreacher.org/))

In 2011, a movie about Sam’s life was made. Show the trailer from *Machine Gun Preacher*, which you can find here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4Rmxqu5xm8>.

This movie is rated R, but the trailer is age appropriate.

ASK: Why would I show you this clip or tell you Sam’s story during a study of Rahab? Do you see any similarities between their stories?

On a whiteboard or poster board, write RAHAB. On another, write SAM.

Write down everything the students say is similar about the two characters.

On a third poster board, write GOD.

ASK: What do we learn about God through these two people? Write down the students’ responses.

SAY: As we can see from both Rahab and Sam, God doesn’t care about our past. He wants to use us whenever we are ready.



CONNECT TO MY LIFE AND THE WORLD

Student Goal: Youth will begin to think about the ways in which they can influence their neighborhoods and be witnesses to Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:8-10 states, “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.”

ASK: What does it mean to live as children of light?

What are some things you can do to be light?

What does this verse teach us about our past sins?

Distribute this week’s student handout. If you have time, ask the students to spend some time reflecting on the lesson. Give them five to ten minutes to fill in their answers before you close. If you don’t have time, ask them to take the handout home with them and spend some time in reflection this week.

CREATIVE OPTION: HOLLYWOOD CALLS

Pair students up in groups of two or three. Have them rewrite the scene of Rahab and the spies. Tell them they have been selected for the next Hollywood blockbuster hit. Ask them to turn this story into a movie script and select actors for each role.



CLOSING

Pray the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) together in closing. Have a copy of the Lord’s Prayer available so you do not exclude those who do not know it.

Calling

God does not call the qualified; God qualifies the called.