

# Olympion

## Bible Lesson Curriculum

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***Let us run with  
endurance the race  
that is set before  
us, looking to  
Jesus, the  
founder and perfecter  
of our faith . . .  
Hebrews 12:1-2***





# Introduction

**G**od always keeps His promises! Through the stories of this week, the Olympion Athletes will follow the people of Israel from the edge of the Promised Land, through 40 years of wilderness wandering, into the Land of Promise with God fighting their enemies every step of the way. Sometimes those enemies are those who do not follow God and wish to destroy His people and sometimes it is the enemy of the people's own sin: unbelief, their covetousness, or self-sufficiency.

When placed in its proper context, the story of the conquest of the Promised Land clearly communicates THE story of our God who says, "I will be your God and you will be My people," (Exodus 6:7). This is THE story of our God who is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness, but who will not leave the guilty unpunished (Ex. 34:6-7). This is THE story that began before the calling of Abraham, through the years of slavery in Egypt, to the times of wandering and incomplete conquest, disappointing kings and devastating exile, and will ultimately culminate in the gracious reign and rule of Christ Jesus our Savior and our King in the "better country" promised in Hebrews 11. Therefore, as the writer of Hebrews goes on to say, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses to God's faithfulness, let us invite our Olympion Athletes to join us as we throw off everything that hinders and let us run with endurance the race marked out for us, trusting in a God who always keeps His promises.

## **Biblical Context of Joshua**

The tremendous themes of the Book of Joshua, together with the godly character of people like Joshua, Caleb, and Rahab, lend themselves well to teaching Olympion's Athletes who God is, what it means to glorify Him, and how to run the Race of Faith. The story of the people of Israel in the Bible is the story of how God loves and cares for His people

The Book of Joshua teaches us the necessity of knowing who God is, the character of God as He is defined in the Bible, so that we can trust Him wholeheartedly with our lives. God's faithfulness and holiness are on full display as the Book of Joshua helps us see the seriousness of our sin, but also the mercy of God in making a way to justly destroy our sin through the death of His son, Jesus.

The Book of Joshua also teaches us the necessity of choosing to serve the Lord in spite of anything and everything else. We know and believe that God is the Author of salvation, that He draws His people to Himself before we ever make any movement toward Him, and that He gives us the grace to respond to His call. Yet, when the offer of the Gospel does go out, all people are commanded to respond to it. And respond they must, either in belief or disbelief.

Then, also, there is a daily, moment-by-moment choosing to serve the Lord in the life of the Christian. We make this choice knowing that God often takes the small things of life to confuse those who think they are wise. Therefore, we are called to be faithful to Him and to seek a life that honors Him, often in the face of great trouble



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and difficulty. In the eyes of the world, we appear to be anything but successful. Victory for the Christian is not necessarily defined by anything that can be measured by the world. As Christians, we need to understand and teach this concept in a real and practical way to the children.

Finally, the Book of Joshua teaches the great theme of allegiance to the Word of God. Over and over, the Law is read and the people make a verbal commitment to it. Over and over, Joshua's life reflects deep faithfulness to the Word of God. It is a simple, straightforward commitment to seeking a life and a mind saturated with the Word.

(See note on page 6) contains a brief study on Joshua as a type of Christ to help us think more deeply about the lessons and to help us prepare our hearts to teach them.<sup>7</sup>

## ***Foundational Perspective***

It is our commitment, inasmuch as is possible, to teach the whole counsel of God. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to unduly simplify or neglect certain truths of the Scripture with children. Rather, in a straightforward manner, the deeper doctrines should be presented also. The venerable Bishop J.C. Ryle spoke to this issue in his discourse on the duties of parents:

- ◎ “See that they read it *all* (the Bible). You need not shrink from bringing any doctrine before them. You need not fancy that the leading doctrines of Christianity are things which children cannot understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we are apt to suppose.
- ◎ Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can comprehend something of this.
- ◎ Tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work for our salvation—the atonement, the cross, the blood, the sacrifice, the intercession: you will discover there is something not beyond them in all this.
- ◎ Tell them of the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies: you will soon see they can go along with you in some measure in this. In short, I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious Gospel. They see far more of these things than we suppose.
- ◎ Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.”<sup>1</sup>

Finally, it is important to emphasize the significance of the role of the Bible Lesson Storyteller in tying together all of Olympion, its overall themes and truths, as well as that of every Coach and Assistant Coach in personally reinforcing this message with your students. As stated in the Teacher Guides, the Bible Lesson Curriculum is the single most important aspect of Olympion and its central focus. It gives purpose and meaning to every other part of the curriculum. May the young Athletes of Olympion be taught of Jesus Christ as they hear the

<sup>1</sup> John C. Ryle, Train Up A Child In The Way He Should Go, “The Duties of Parents,” *Christian Heritage Publisher*, 1983, p. 11.

profound truths of these lessons from the book of Joshua and see them exemplified in your interactions with them.

## **Using the Lessons**

### **SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR STORYTELLERS**

#### **Before You Begin**

Set aside a specific period of time to read through all of the Scripture passages and Bible lesson material, preferably in one sitting. Such an overview provides an invaluable sense of the curriculum's total picture and establishes a clear framework from which to teach.

#### **Prayer**

The importance of prayer cannot be overstated. The Lord is eager to give the ability to teach, the enthusiasm and creativity to do the teaching well, and even the words that will be on the tongue. But He is also eager that His children faithfully ask Him for His presence and help.

#### **Lesson Format**

For each lesson you will find: 1) the title; 2) the storytelling character; 3) the Scripture reference; 4) the main theme; 5) a story summary and outline; 6) teacher notes; 7) story.

Though the lessons are provided in a word-for-word format, it will be important for you to gear your presentation to your audience, both in your choice of the amount of content to cover and in making specific lesson applications.

#### **Lesson Material**

It is so true that the more fully something is understood, the more easily it can be put into profound terms while being simply and briefly taught. With that in mind, material has been included with each lesson to aid you in your understanding of the story. The teacher notes are primarily intended for your benefit as a teacher and are not to be conveyed to the children as such.

#### **Storytelling Character**

History comes alive for children as they listen to an imaginary eyewitness account. As a Storyteller, you will increase the children's anticipation, excitement, and interest in the lessons as you capture their imagination and help them realize that these events took place in real history with real people. Try to take on the character of the Storyteller, telling the events of the story in the first person, according to his or her personality and life-context. Alternative characters have also been included for each story to provide flexibility for your setting.

#### **Lesson Application**

Though application ideas are provided with each lesson, the job of making practical application specific to the lives of the children you teach rests with



#### **Scripture passages to read in preparation:**

- Exodus 17:8–15; 24:13; 32:15–21; 33:7–11
- Numbers 13:1–14
- Deuteronomy 1:1–2:15; 3:21–29; 4:5–14, 39–40; 6; 7; 27; 28; 31; 32:44–52
- Joshua 1–8; 14, 16–18, 23; 24



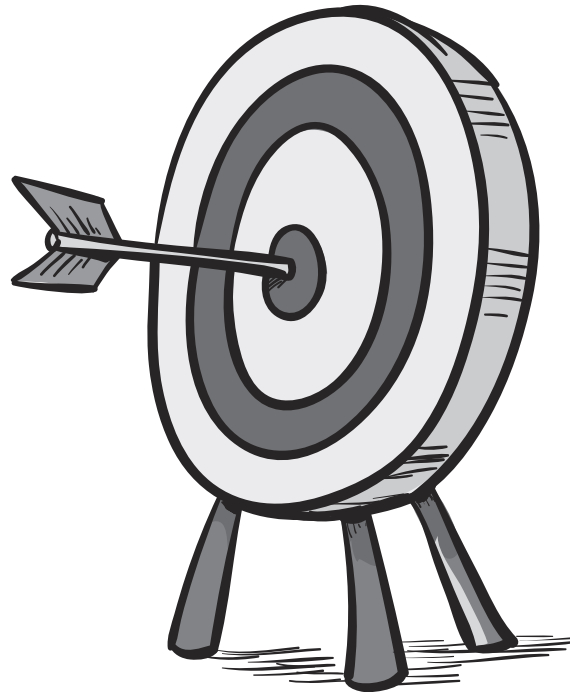
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you. It will be very important to think carefully about the personal issues and questions facing each different class and to prepare your lessons accordingly. Age-appropriate lesson applications are also very important. Though the main body of each lesson is essentially the same for all grade levels, the concerns of a 4-year-old are different than an 11-year-old. You will want to give prayerful consideration to how to best speak to the different ages you will teach.

Also, as you will note from each day's "Lesson Application," the potential is there every day for you to give the Gospel message and an invitation to the children to trust in Jesus Christ. You will, therefore, need to be particularly sensitive to the specific children you are teaching. Pray for discernment as to their spiritual condition and responsiveness to the truth, to know when the Spirit wants you to present the Gospel more fully and to invite their response. Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading and keep the following in mind as you interact with the children:

- ⦿ Do not belabor the invitation of the Gospel to the point that the children tire of it early in the week; there will be other times throughout Olympion when the Gospel will be presented, particularly during The Race of Life.
- ⦿ Where possible, avoid "stealing the punch" from the Day 4 lesson. That lesson gives a full and clear presentation of who Jesus is and what He has done. But having said that, do encourage the response of these children since at this tender age they are so very ripe for the Gospel. Their response to Jesus is often wholehearted and we must not minimize it. By all means, ask them for a response. Do not let timidity or fear that the children might be insincere keep you from urging them to put their faith and trust in Christ.



# Joshua's Messianic Role<sup>1</sup>

The person and work of Joshua prepared God's people for the Messiah in at least four ways.

First, Joshua was a messianic<sup>2</sup> type. He was not an ancestor of Jesus Christ; he was a leader from the tribe of Ephraim, not of Judah. In various ways Joshua is to be seen as a type. His name<sup>3</sup> and the manner in which he fulfilled the meaning of his name are definite factors. A true type is first of all a symbol; Joshua was a symbol in the sense that Yahweh worked through him to carry out His covenant program. Joshua in his person represented Yahweh; he was, indeed, the actual means, the active agent before and among Israel. For the people to see Joshua minister in their midst was to see Yahweh at work among them and on their behalf.

Second, Joshua is to be considered messianic in the narrower sense. Though he was neither a specifically royal nor priestly person, he did function as if he were a royal person, in a royal capacity, having royal prerogatives. He is never referred to as seeking royal status. But he, as a person, had messianic characteristics and displayed

these as he carried out his messianic tasks.

Third, Joshua was a messianic type in the wider sense as well. He carried out salvation deeds. In fact, he was more so than any of his predecessors, whose messianic character and work were preparatory to Joshua's. He carried out a wide range of salvation deeds which involved and influenced every dimension of Israel's life.

Fourth, Joshua as a messianic agent served predominantly as a royal figure. He represented the office of king. While he is not known to have ever served in the role of priest, he did reflect the office and role of prophet. He did this in two ways. He was a communicator of divine revelation. He did not preach as prophets did later but by carrying out Yahweh's will he made it known to the people. And, as he administered the covenant, he also made Yahweh's will known. True, he communicated and served as administrator in the capacity of the royal one but simultaneously did "prophetic work."

<sup>1</sup> Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 263-264.

<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, the messianic concept refers to a person who works to fulfill God's promises of salvation (Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, 19-20).

<sup>3</sup> In Hebrew, "Joshua" means "The LORD is salvation." In Greek (the language of the New Testament), "Joshua" is translated to "Jesus."

<b>Joshua</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Hebrew name "Joshua" means "The LORD is salvation."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Greek name "Jesus" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name "Joshua."</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joshua saved Israel, God's people, through the power of God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus, by His own power, saved all of spiritual Israel, the people of God.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The career of Joshua, the conqueror, prepares us for and is fulfilled in Christ.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus, the Conqueror, came into the world to fight against and destroy the works of the Devil.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moses, the great lawgiver, brought God's people out of slavery in Egypt, but the privilege of bringing them into the Promised Land was reserved for Joshua.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law God gave to Moses, and He alone brings God's people into the eternal land of promise.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joshua defeated the Amalekites, making the way to enter the Promised Land. He worked to subdue the Canaanites, making it possible to take possession of the land.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jesus defeated the Devil, opening the way for His people to enjoy God's eternal blessings. He continues to subdue the spiritual enemies of His people as they continue the journey to their eternal rest.</li> </ul>

The content of this chart is based on the work of G. F. Maclear in *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* published by Cambridge University Press in 1897.

# Storytelling Character Costume Suggestions

Refer to the Storytelling Character section at the beginning of each lesson for a more complete description of the following characters.

## **Lesson One: Volly the Vulture or Elya the Eagle**

*Predatory bird (but not distractingly scary):*

### **Volly:**

- red fitted head covering
- white feather boa wrapped around neck
- black poncho
- black tights or pants
- red or black shoes or socks
- long black plastic fingernails for talons (optional)
- beak mask (optional; can be removed when speaking)

### **Elya:**

- white fitted head covering
- white feather boa
- white poncho
- black tights or pants
- orange or black shoes or socks

## **Lesson Two: Jeriah (Juh-RYE-uh) the Levite or Taliah (TAHL-ee-uh), Jeriah the Levite's wife**

- tunic with sash (often purple)
- white turban (wife would have cloth head covering-scarf)
- sandals
- carry a long pole (such as a piece of bamboo or a dowel rod)

## **Lesson Three: Redeemed Rahab (RAY-hab) or Jakin (JAY-kin), Israelite spy to Jericho**

### **Rahab:**

*Colorfully dressed Canaanite woman*

- ankle-length full colorful skirt and blousy top, colorfully patterned
- coordinated lightweight long scarves or netting, tied as belt, with length hanging at hips
- several strands of bright beads, some waist-length
- jewelry: wrist and ankle bracelets, bangles, rings, etc.
- silky scarf stylishly wrapped around temple with hair uncovered; fabric may be twisted or braided and adorned with more beads, jewelry, etc.
- heavy makeup, especially around the eyes
- sandals or bare feet
- carry a length of red rope



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