

RE READ *the big story*
JOSHUA 6:1-14

 PREVIOUS BEDTIME STORY: CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER
 CHARACTERS: YAHWEH, JOSHUA, THE LEVITES, THE ISRAELITES

RE VIEW *the context*

Joshua had sent spies into the city of Jericho to scout out the scene in advance of their entry into Canaan. One major hurdle remained: the Jordan River. In peak flood season, the river was uncrossable. Local Canaanites believed the flooding river to be judgement from the gods and Baal, their chief god, was only the one to possess power over it. That is, until Yahweh showed up, stopped the river, and allowed his people to cross on dry ground. The people in Jericho were terrified and waited for Yahweh's next move.

RE ENTER *through the 2nd story*
A REIMAGINING OF JOSHUA 6:16-25

'When will that infernal noise cease?!' A Canaanite soldier shook his head in distress. **'I can't handle another second of that trumpet blasting!'** The captain looked down his line of soldiers. **'Stand firm! You serve the king of Jericho and our god Baal! We will defend this wall with our lives. Don't be afraid of these trumpet blowers! Look at them! You can't take hold of a city by just marching around it! Get a grip!'** But the words fell on deaf ears, for across the wall of Jericho there was a great stirring of unrest among the troops. For seven days the Israelites had marched around Jericho. For seven days the city gates had been shut. Seven days they waited, and wondered, when Yahweh - the God who stopped the Jordan - would show up and attack Jericho.

Far below the city walls the soldiers of Israel were on the move. The priests were at the head of the line, blowing their trumpets, breath in and breath out, all day long. The Ark of the Covenant followed, glistening like a bright star in the noon-day sun. The soldiers of Israel, at the rear, marched in silence. They looked neither right nor left, only forward, and there was not a whisper of conversation among them. Marching, marching, marching. One, two, three, four, five, six times around the gates.

Joshua stood on a high place overseeing the operation. He looked down to his guard with a smile. **'We've almost done it,'** he said. **'One more pass and, oh, armies of Israel, you will see God do wonders among you.'** Finally, Joshua could see the Ark of the Covenant rounding the turn and passing the city gates for the seventh, and last, time. Joshua grabbed his tribal flag of Ephraim. He hoisted the flag over his head and waved it high for the whole of the army to see. The Ark stopped. The army stood still, surrounding the walls in every direction. **'Today!'** Joshua called out. **'God has given you this city! Now shout - army of Yahweh! Shout! For God has given you the city!'**

The priests blew the ram's horn, and in an instant, the entire army shouted in a single deafening cry. The earth shook - snapped - and cracked. And in a moment, the walls of Jericho split like a tinder and collapsed at once. **'Take the city!'** Joshua cried. **'Save Rahab and her family! Everything else is God's!'** Without hesitation, the Israelites drew their swords and rushed into the city. Dust and blood filled the air. The city of Jericho was destroyed. Joshua's called out again, **'Take no treasure for yourself! It is God's!'**

RETHINK *in sacred sharing*

Spend some time in sacred reflection, conversation, and listening. Use the following questions as a guide.

- Q: Name a time you experienced a significant breakthrough.
- Q: KIDS: how do you think the soldiers of Jericho felt about Joshua's strategy and plan of attack? Why did the Israelites march around the city for a whole week?
- Q: Have you ever felt silly obeying God? Have you ever been misunderstood by people around you?
- Q: Is there a problem in your life that you can't, or shouldn't, resolve on your own? What is Jesus instructing you to do?
- Q: As we look to the future, what strongholds or 'fortifications' need to be broken within our culture?

RECREATE *in sacred play*

Spend some time in sacred play recreating the fall of Jericho! Below are a list of props, characters, ideas to use your space, and a general flow-of-the-story.

COSTUMES/PROPS: Ram's horns! (*see Crafty Time video), swords, Ark of the Covenant (box on sticks), the wall of Jericho (stacked boxes, cushions, or pillows), treasure (or candy) inside the city!

CHARACTERS: Characters can be divided.

KIDS: Joshua, the priests, the army of Israel.

ADULTS: the king and people of Jericho.

SPACE: Set up the space to resemble the ancient city of Jericho (push together two couches!) Your city walls must be able to collapse!

FLOW: Joshua led the army of Israel towards the city of Jericho. The seven priests and their horns were in front, followed by the Ark of the Covenant and the soldiers. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. After the seventh pass, the ram's horn blew! The people shouted! And the walls of Jericho came a-tumbling down! Joshua commanded the city to be taken, but the treasure to be left for God!

REMAKE *in a sacred meal*

The Israelites crossed the Jordan River and had their final manna-bread-and-quail meal! From that moment, they only ate from the land! Just imagine, if after 40 years of bread and meat, how delicious the fresh fruits and veg of Canaan would have tasted!

CHALLENGE: Make a spectacularly fresh salad sourced entirely from local produce! Make a garden salad, a fruit salad, a spring mix, or all of the above! Give thanks for spring and for God's bounty!

RESPOND *in sacred prayer*

God did the spectacular by drying up the Jordan River. But even past mighty deeds can be forgotten in times of trouble. Before their march on Jericho, Joshua had 12 leaders from the 12 tribes take a stone from the river and build an altar of remembrance. 'Tell your children what God has done!' (Joshua 4).

Go outside for a prayerful walk. On route, have each family member look for a 'stone of significance.' Find a tranquil and reflective spot to stop and build a monument of remembrance. Stack your stones one on top of the other and share aloud your stories of God's mighty deeds. Give thanks for His goodness!