

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Bible Basis: Joshua 1:1–11, 2:1–24

Key Verse: Be strong and very brave. Make sure you obey the whole law. ... Then you will have success everywhere you go. —Joshua 1:7, NIV

Bible Point: God sent help for his people. God sends me to help, too.

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 7: “The Battle Begins”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff You Need: masking tape

As you begin class, get out the roll of masking tape and begin pulling off a long strip. Aim for eight to ten feet. As you pull tape, talk about what you are trying to do. **I need a really long piece of tape, but I’m not sure what the best way to do this is.** Struggle with the task. Invite suggestions. If someone volunteers to help, accept it. If not, ask for help. One child can hold the roll while you pull the tape and walk ten feet away. Or you might want to enlist several students. When you have a long strip, attach it to the floor. (Depending on your set-up, you might be able to use it for the Bible verse game below.) Talk about:

- Why was that a hard thing for me to do by myself?
- Tell me something that is hard for you to do by yourself.

Say, **We all have hard things to do. Sometimes we can do them alone, but sometimes it’s okay to ask for help. In our Bible story today, God used someone to help his people.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff You Need: copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 7*, signs labeled A, B, and C

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 7. You can also have children find Joshua 1 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

RAHAB THE HELPER

Post the “A,” “B,” and “C” signs around the room. When you come to a multiple-choice question in the story, pause for children to move to the sign they think is the right answer.

Read Joshua 1:1–2. But they were going to have to fight some battles first. The first city to conquer was Jericho. Joshua sent two men to spy on Jericho and make sure it was safe for God's people to attack.

When the spies got to Jericho, they saw that it had high, thick walls around the whole city. The walls were as high and thick as a house with two floors! How would they ever get in? Do you think they: A) gave up and went home; B) sat down to think about the problem; C) figured out a way to get into the city? *Pause for children to move to signs.*

The spies got into the city of Jericho. There they met a woman named Rahab, who lived in a house attached to the city wall. Do you think they: A) tied her up because she was the enemy; B) decided to stay at her house; C) ran away as fast as they could? *Pause for children to move.*

The men decided to stay at Rahab's house. It turned out Rahab knew about God and his plan, and she wanted to keep the spies safe. But then the king of Jericho heard the spies had come! He sent a message to Rahab. It said, "Bring out the men who came to your house." Do you think Rahab: A) hid the men under a pile of stuff on the roof; B) pretended she didn't get the message; C) invited the messengers in for lunch? *Pause for children to move.*

Rahab had heard the king's messengers coming and hid the Israelite spies on her roof under a pile of flax plants. She told the messengers, "It's true the men were here. Go after them quickly. You might catch up with them." The king's men left to hunt down the spies. Rahab went up to the roof to talk to the spies. Do you think she told them: A) "You have to get out of here now"; B) "I know the Lord has given this land to you"; C) "I'm sorry I ever let you in"? *Pause for children to move.*

Rahab knew it was God's plan to give the land to the Israelites. *Read Joshua 2:12–13.* Do you think the men said: A) "We can't make any promises"; B) "Sorry, you're the enemy"; C) "We'll give up our lives to save yours"? *Pause for children to move.*

The men promised to keep Rahab and her family safe when the Israelites attacked Jericho. Rahab's house was attached to the big thick wall around the city. She let the spies down with a rope through the window. The spies went and hid in the hills for three days until they were sure it was safe to come out. Then they went back to Joshua and told him everything that had happened to them.

Do you think Joshua thought: A) the spies had been chickens; B) God would take care of his people in the battle; C) conquering Jericho was too hard? *Pause for children to move.*

Joshua liked the spies' report. He knew it meant God would take care of them once they started fighting in Canaan, the land God was giving them. Joshua had all the Israelites pray and get ready to attack Jericho.

God knew the spies would need some help, and he made sure Rahab was there to help them. He knows when you need help, too. And, he even knows when you might be able to be the one who helps.

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 7*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about how the Israelites fought the battle of Jericho. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **Why did the two men in the Bible story need help?**
- **How did Rahab help them?**

Say, **God sent help for his people. God might send us to help someone, too.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: BIBLE VERSE CRUMPLE

Stuff You Need: paper, marker, bins or baskets, whiteboard or newsprint

Ahead of time, write these segments from the Bible verse on separate, full sheets of paper: Be strong / and very brave. / Make sure you / obey the whole law. / Then you will have success / everywhere you go. Make a set of verse sheets for every four or five children you expect. Also write the verse on the board. During class, help the children to read the verse together. Then show a set of papers. (Younger children may not be fluent readers, but they can practice recognizing the verse segments and compare to what is on the board.) Have the children tightly crumple up the sheets and put them in a basket. Set the baskets about ten feet away from the starting area. Children will take turns running to the basket, smoothing paper to find the next verse segment, and bringing it back to the group. If they open a sheet that is the wrong segment, they should crumple it again and keep looking. Play until the whole verse is assembled. After the game, talk about:

- **How were the people in our story strong and brave?**
- **Tell me about a time God helped you be strong and brave.**

Say, **Sometimes the people God sends to help us show us how to be strong and brave, the way Rahab helped the spies. Don't forget to look for ways you can help, too.**

OPTION 2: SHH! BE STILL!

Stuff You Need: small, lightweight objects, hard surface to drop them on

Gather a variety of small, lightweight objects such as a pin, thumbtack, paper clip, rubber band, pencil eraser, length of string, gum wrapper, scrap of paper. Say, **Rahab helped the men in our story by hiding them, but they had to keep very still and quiet. I wonder how long we can all be perfectly still and quiet. Let's see if we can be quiet enough to hear a pin drop.** Pause and give everyone a chance to hold still. Have children close their eyes or put their heads down. Then quietly let them know you're going to drop some items, and if they hear the sound, they should raise their

hands. Start with the heavier objects that will make a louder sound and progress to the ones that are more difficult to hear. Wrap up with these questions.

- **What do you suppose the men in the story heard when they were being quiet?**
- **How can being quiet sometimes help us to hear what God wants to tell us?**

Say, **God sent Rahab to help the two men. If we're quiet enough to listen to his voice, God might ask us to help someone, too.**

Option 3: Rahab Helps

Stuff You Need: Rahab Helps Activity Sheet, crayons or markers

Give an activity sheet to each child. Review the story of Rahab with the class. Ask whether they think she was a hero to help the Israelites. Instruct the class to color the picture of Rahab hiding the spies ... being a hero! On the other side of the paper, have the children draw and color a picture of another hero that helped someone.

Option 4: Musical Instruments

Stuff You Need: musical instruments

Say, **The priests blew their trumpets in the battle of Jericho. We are going to walk around our room seven times using our musical instruments like the people of Israel did.** Give each child a musical instrument. If you don't have enough instruments for every child, have some children clap their hands and trade with someone who has an instrument each time around the room. You can make your own musical instrument by filling an empty, clean soda bottle no more than three-quarters full with beads or uncooked rice or beans. Make sure the cap is tightly screwed on before shaking the bottle.

After you are done marching around the room, sing some of the children's favorite songs accompanied by the musical instruments.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Pray together that you will have faith and believe in God's promises. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 7*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.