

Choose Who You Will Serve!

Joshua 24:1-28 KJV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

Choose Who You Will Serve



Choices are part of daily life for everyone. While young children are not faced with quite as many decisions as adults, it is still important for them to learn that choices are meaningful and can have significant impact on their lives. In this lesson, discuss with students examples of choices, and talk about the most critical option we have: whether to serve or abandon the Lord. Describe what it means to serve God, and how it will bless our lives when we do.

God is faithful to us and provides for us. He loves us and promises to always be with us. Part of the Lord's love is that He gives us a choice. We are not forced to serve Him, but can decide who and what we devote ourselves to. When we consider God's power and providence, though, there really is only one option. Serving Him demonstrates our gratitude for His faithfulness, and also allows us to be richly blessed by His love and mercy.

Passage: Joshua 24:1-28

Target Audience: Kindergarten–6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; box/container; paper plates; trays or plates; items representing choices; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "Joshua"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "God's People: Joshua"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and encourage them to think about choices...

Do you have to make choices? Decisions are part of our daily lives, whether we like it or not, and every day is full of them. Now, there are likely some things that your parents still choose for you, at least for now, and that's probably for the best. But you still have choices to make about what you wear, what you eat, what you do, what you say...Hold up examples or pictures of items as you describe. Now, there are some options you might have that don't make a big difference. For instance, if you were deciding between Pringles or Lay's potato chips, they are both chips. But if you were choosing potato chips or carrot sticks, that would be a little more significant, wouldn't it? Which would you rather have? Or would you rather have an apple or a chocolate bar? Would you rather read a book or watch a movie? How about this: Let's say I gave you \$50... How do you think you would spend it? On a new toy? Maybe to help someone? Or would you save it for later?

We are faced with many choices, some big and some smaller. God wants us to be wise and make good decisions in the way that we speak, act, and think. But there is one choice God gives us that is the most important one we have. Do you know what that might be? It is the choice to love and serve Him. God loves us and wants what is best for us. He wants us to love Him. But He doesn't want to force us into that. Because of His deep care, He gives us the will to decide, and we can make the choice to turn away and reject Him. However, given His power and grace, it seems a little silly to make that decision, doesn't it?

There's a passage in the Bible that talks about this. It features a man named Joshua. You might remember that Joshua was the man who took over leadership of Israel after Moses. He led the people across the Jordan River, and captured the city of Jericho. Well, the Israelites were taking over the Promised Land, and Joshua came to them with a message

from God. God was inviting them to choose who they were going to worship. There were a lot of false gods that the people living around them served. God said that they could also choose to look to those fake deities and idols for strength, or they could choose the one true God, who had rescued them from the Egyptians and brought them into the Promised Land. Joshua reminded the people how God was faithful and had always been with them. He said that he and his household would serve Yahweh, but the others could do as they wished. The people knew that God was the obvious and only one they should follow, and they agreed to serve Him and forsake any others.

We have this choice, too. Some people choose to honor and worship other things. Maybe not idols of wood and stone, but people chase after wealth, success, jobs, or even good things like health and family. When they are placed above God, they become idols. We don't want anything to be more important than the Lord of the universe, who has given us all we have. It's important to put God first and foremost in what we think, say, and do.

And how do we do that? How do we serve Him and make sure that we are choosing wisely? Well, reading the Bible will give us clues and help us. When we are familiar with God's word, we know His heart. Going to church and talking with others who love Him can also offer ways to understand how to follow and serve Him. And of course, we can pray and ask God to help us decide on the best ways to live. The Holy Spirit will guide us and guard our hearts. So choose who you will serve. Maybe right now you come to church because your parents do, but someday you will get to decide for yourselves. I don't know about you, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for letting us make choices.

Guide us to make wise choices.

Help us to remember how important it is to follow you

And help us to serve you in all that we do.

Thank you for your love.

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions

(10 minutes)



This passage features a historical Bible story that reminds us of the importance of wise choices. To get students thinking and ready to learn, consider an activity opener along these lines:

- Would you rather? Begin with a few fun rounds of “full body would you rather”: Designate sections of the room and call out several options for students. They can walk to different parts of the room according to their decision.
- How will you serve? Discuss the concept of serving with a restaurant-themed game.
 - For “waiter relay”, provide students with small trays and have them take turns walking across a play area to retrieve play food items. The next student in line must await their return and then pick up items of their own. If the tray or any items drop, they must start over. Choose whether to play until the first team is finished, or to see who gets the most items in a designated time.
 - For “Waiter knock-off”, give each student a plate, clipboard, or small tray, and place something small on top of it (fake food, ball of aluminum foil or paper, toy, etc.). The goal is to be the last person with something on the “tray”. Children walk around keeping the plate in the air with one hand, while trying to knock the plates or items of others. Once the plate or the item falls, the player must sit down. Talk about how there are many types of serving (restaurant workers being one of them), but it’s important to serve God.
- Choose God first! Have students write or draw things that might be distracting or sometimes get placed before God (video games, money, popularity, school, sports, etc.). Talk about “trading in” other items to make sure Jesus comes first. Have students hand in their papers and receive a small cross or pocket Bible instead.

Discuss how important it is to be wise in the choices that we make and the things we do. This lesson will look at how we should decide to put God first and to follow and serve Him in our lives.

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage involves a lot of describing that Joshua gives to the people of Israel, along with their responses to important questions. Read aloud and discuss as you go, or have older students take turns reading. For younger kids, select portions of the passage to highlight and explain.

Joshua 24:1-5 KJV *And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. (2) And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. (3) And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. (4) And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. (5) I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.*

These opening verses set the scene to show how Joshua gathered everyone together for an important discussion about trusting and serving God. Explain the context of this passage. Joshua was a mighty leader who had taken over after the death of Moses. Joshua led the people of God into the promised land, helping them defeat the stronghold of Jericho to take over. Now it was almost time for Joshua to pass away, but first he wanted to set things in order with the people. The words he speaks to them here are actually God's words. God starts out by reminding His people of the great things He has

done for them. He was faithful to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.) and rescued them from Egyptian slavery.

Ask: What are some good things that God has done in your life? Why is it important to remember them?

Joshua 24:6-13 KJV *And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. (7) And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. (8) And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. (9) Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: (10) But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. (11) And you went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. (12) And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. (13) And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.*

(*Note: this section could be skipped to save time or reading)

Here God continues to describe the story of His faithfulness to the people. He rescued them from enemies and stayed with them, leading them to safety in the midst of danger and hardship. God is reminding the people that He is the one true God, more powerful and mighty than any other, and far more worthy of worship than false gods. The “gods” other countries worshiped were not capable of God’s power.

Ask: How do we remember God’s work in our lives? (Communion, celebrations, songs, prayers.)

Joshua 24:14–15 KJV *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. (15) And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

Joshua is making a bold statement of faith about things that are and things that will come. Not only does he say that he will choose God, but that he has already made that decision and will continue to serve Yahweh. He challenges the other Israelites to serve the Lord, too, or if not, to make a decision about who or what they would worship. God wasn’t forcing them to love Him, but it made sense to follow Him!

Ask: How do you make tough decisions? Why is it so important to choose things wisely?

Joshua 24:16–18 KJV *And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; (17) For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:*

(18) And the Lord drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

The people here agree with Joshua and are willing to serve God as well. They acknowledge that He had done great things and certainly was the one true Lord. They are ready to dedicate themselves to God, but Joshua warns them not to take that commitment lightly.

Joshua 24:19–24 KJV *And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. (20) If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. (21) And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. (22) And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. (23) Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. (24) And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*

Joshua wants to make sure that the people understand the severity of their commitment. Serving God means loving and trusting in Him alone, and not chasing after foreign Gods. It means obeying Him and knowing that only He has power to forgive and help. The people promise to follow and serve the Lord.

Ask: What do you think it means to serve God? What are some ways that we can serve Him?

Joshua 24:25–28 KJV *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. (26) And Joshua wrote these*

words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. (27) And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. (28) So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

Ask: How can we remember our commitments and devotions to God?

Remind students that God continues to do remarkable things in our lives. And He continues to give us the choice to love and obey Him. Sadly, some people decide to reject His love and walk away from Him. Some choose other “gods” instead of the Lord, and worship things that cannot satisfy like He can. Hopefully, we understand that He is the only One worth devoting ourselves to. We can trust that He will take care of us and that we can daily decide to commit ourselves to Him. Choose this day who you will serve, and choose God!

Close with prayer, thanking God for His care and asking for help in making wise choices.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

God chooses us and loves us. He wants us to follow and serve Him, but doesn't force us to do so. In Joshua, a choice is given to the Israelites to serve God. These crafts recall the Bible passage and encourage students to follow the Lord. A "Serving Jar" is a decorative way to hold offerings or service ideas. A "Home Plate" decoration considers the verse and the importance of corporately serving God first and foremost. Let's get crafty!

Craft one: "Service Jar"

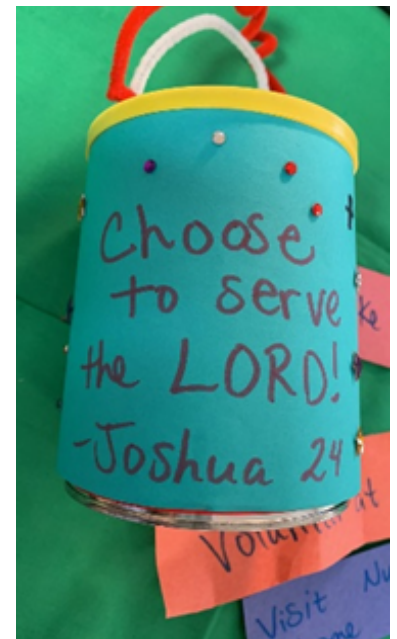
You will need:

- Empty box or container
- Paper or cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Tape or Glue
- Extra decorations (stickers, pipe cleaners, etc.)



Procedure:

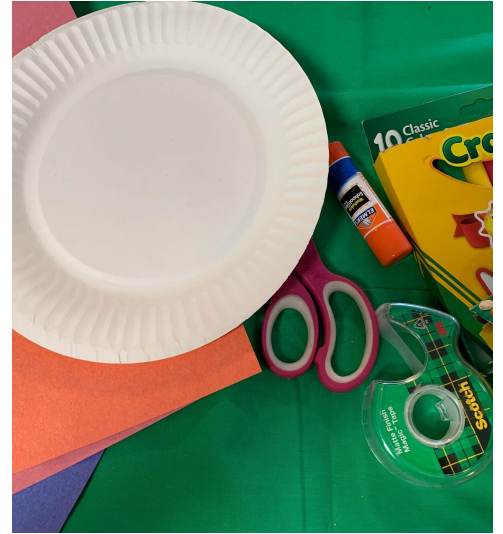
1. Cover the empty container with paper of some sort (wrapping, tissue, or construction paper).
2. Add verses and captions to describe the purpose of the jar.
3. Add extra decorations (stickers, gems, etc.) as desired.
4. Option: Cut a slit in the top of the container to insert items.
5. Use extra paper to write ways of serving. Keep them in the jar as a reminder of positive service ideas. OR use the jar for tithing savings or prayer requests.



Craft Two: "Home Plate Decoration"

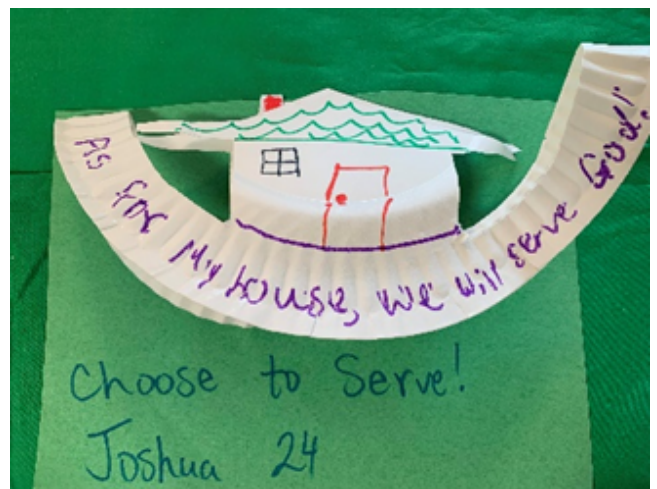
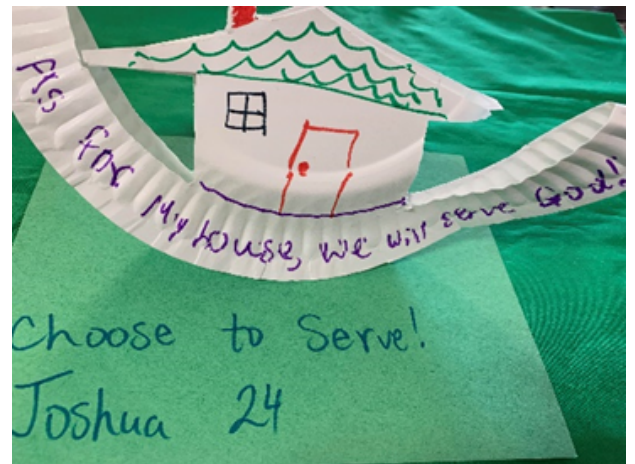
You will need:

- Paper plate
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Markers or crayons
- Glue or tape
- Scissors



Procedure:

1. Fold the paper plate in half, and draw a house shape in the center.
2. Being careful not to cut all the way through the edge of the plate, cut away the lines to expose the "popping out" house.
3. Add color and decorative elements to the house.
4. Add verses and captions.
5. If desired, place the house on a "lawn" or other piece of paper to help it stand out and make a fun memorable decoration!



Joshua 24:24 KJV

"The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."





Word Search Puzzle

Joshua - Tribe - Israel - Shechem - Jacob - Esau

Aaron - Egypt - Wilderness - Amorites - Jordan - Jericho

A	N	A	K	N	X	V	N	T	A	J
J	F	A	W	T	J	O	S	H	U	A
T	O	A	I	D	R	E	U	U	H	M
M	A	R	L	M	J	C	G	G	S	O
F	J	O	D	A	K	A	C	Y	S	R
X	E	N	E	A	I	I	C	C	P	I
T	R	Y	R	S	N	S	N	O	T	T
U	I	X	N	U	A	T	R	I	B	E
K	C	X	E	O	U	U	V	A	R	S
F	H	F	S	E	E	Y	X	H	E	U
D	O	O	S	H	E	C	H	E	M	L

Word Search Answers

