

“Memorial Stones”

Sunday School Lesson fo Memorial Day



This lesson was created to be used on Memorial Day weekend. It is based on the story from the book of Joshua when God instructs a man from each of the twelve tribes to take a stone from the Jordan River as a memorial of how God led them to the Promised Land.

The children will paint and take home their own memorial stone as a reminder of Christ’s work on the cross. This lesson would also work well as a Memorial Day Sunday School Lesson.

Bible Passage: Joshua 4:1-20

Bible Story Title: Memorial Stones

Target Age Group: K – 5th grade

Target Time Frame: 30 minutes. It may take longer for the craft paint to dry.

Original Teaching Context: Children’s Church or Sunday School

Learning Objective: The children will learn how the Israelites used special stones to remember God’s faithfulness and make their own stone to remember Christ’s sacrifice for them.

Materials Needed: One clean stone per student, one small paintbrush per student, one color acrylic paint

Optional: We have attached bonus ideas and coloring pages at the end of this lesson. Don’t feel obligated to use them all if your teaching time is short. We just wanted to make sure you have everything you need.

Lesson: Memorial Stones

Hook:

1. “Our country is celebrating a special holiday tomorrow! Does anyone know what it is called?” (Memorial Day)
2. “Why do we celebrate Memorial Day?” (Because we are remembering and honoring the people who serve in our military. They work to keep us safe and give us our freedom.)
3. Write the word Memorial on the front board. “See how the word memorial is like the word memory. On Memorial Day, we *remember* and thank the people in our military.”

Book:

1. In the Old Testament of our Bibles God’s people also had a time of memorial to remember what God had done for them.
2. “Open your Bibles to Joshua 4. Before we read let’s talk about what happened before Joshua 4. Remember God’s people had been in slavery in Egypt and God used Moses to lead his people out of slavery and across the Red Sea. Then, God led them to wander through the wilderness for forty years, but every day He was faithful to give them the quail and manna they needed. Then God finally led the Israelites to the land He had promised them when He led them out of Egypt. That brings us to today’s story.”
3. “Let’s read Joshua 4:1-20” Tip: For younger children you may prefer to read this from a storybook Bible or children’s Bible.
4. “This is the story of how God led His people across the Jordan River on dry ground and into the Promised Land. God wanted a man from each of the twelve tribes to pick up a stone as they crossed the Jordan.”

Look:

1. "Why were these twelve stones important?" Ask for input from the children.
2. "The Israelites were to keep the twelve stones as a way to remember how God led them safely across the Jordan River. When they looked at the stones they could remember God's faithfulness in Egypt, through the wilderness, and now in the Promised Land."
3. "These were memorial stones!"
4. "God wanted them to have something to look at so they would not forget how He had taken care of them."

Took:

1. "What are some good things God has done for you that you want to remember?" Ask for input from the children.
2. "The most important thing God has done for us is given his son Jesus. Jesus came to earth to live a perfect life and die on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. This is the best thing God could have done for you and for me, so that we are no longer separated from Him by our sin. We need to always remember how God gave us Jesus."
3. "Today you are going to paint your own memorial stone as a reminder to you of how God gave us Jesus. When you look at your stone you can remember how Jesus died on the cross for your sins and you can thank God sending His Son Jesus to die in your place."

Memorial Stones Craft

Craft Objective: To be used with lesson on Joshua 4 as a way for the children to remember God's sacrifice of His Son Jesus.

Materials Needed:

- One clean, dry stone for each child
- One paintbrush for each child
- One paper plate or pie tin for each child to use as a paint palette
- One color acrylic paint. The amount of paint needed depends upon the number of children.
- Masking tape
- Sharpie marker

Procedure:

1. Pass out one stone, one paintbrush, and one empty paint palette to each child.
2. Show a stone which is already completed.
3. The children will choose which side of their stone will be the top.
4. Squeeze a small amount of paint onto each child's palette.
5. The children will paint a cross on the top of their stone.
6. The adult helpers will write each child's name on a piece of masking tape and stick it to the bottom of the stone.
7. Set the stones aside and allow to dry.

Tips:

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- For youngest children, you could forego the paintbrushes and have the children use their finger to make the cross.
- The stones must be scrubbed clean and be completely dry for the paint to stick to the surface. I recommend you wash the stones a few days in advance and set them outside to dry.
- If due to time or budget constraints you do not want to paint the stones, the lesson can be just as effective if the children simply bring home a plain stone. The teacher can bring in a collection of stones to choose from or if available you could take the class for a walk to choose a small stone from the grounds of your church campus.

Joshua 4:1-20 NIV

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, ²“Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, ³ and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.”

⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, ⁵ and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, ⁶ to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

⁸ So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. ⁹ Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been ^[a] in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

¹⁰ Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the Lord had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, ¹¹ and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the Lord and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. ¹² The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. ¹³ About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho for war.

¹⁴ That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses.

¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Joshua, ¹⁶“Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan.”

¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.”

¹⁸ And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

¹⁹ On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. ²⁰ And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan.

“Stepping Stones” Game

**This simple [game idea](#) is from [Bible Games Central](#), used with permission. See the next page for the printable stones template.*

How to Play:

Divide into teams of 4 to 10 players.

Two opposite sides of the room are the river banks and the area in between is the river. The objective of this game is to be the team to cross the river using the fewest stepping stones.

Round 1:

Give each team 1 stepping stone for every member they have.

For example, a team with 4 members should get 4 stepping stones.

Everyone begins by standing on one side of the river.

Players must make their way across the river from one bank to the other by stepping only on the stepping stones provided. They are not allowed to step in the water.

The teams that succeed in reaching the opposite river bank moves on to the next round; other teams are eliminated.

Round 2:

Remove one stepping stone from each team and repeat.

Continue removing one stepping stone from each team with each subsequent round.

The team that manages to cross the river with the fewest stepping stones wins.

Stepping Stones

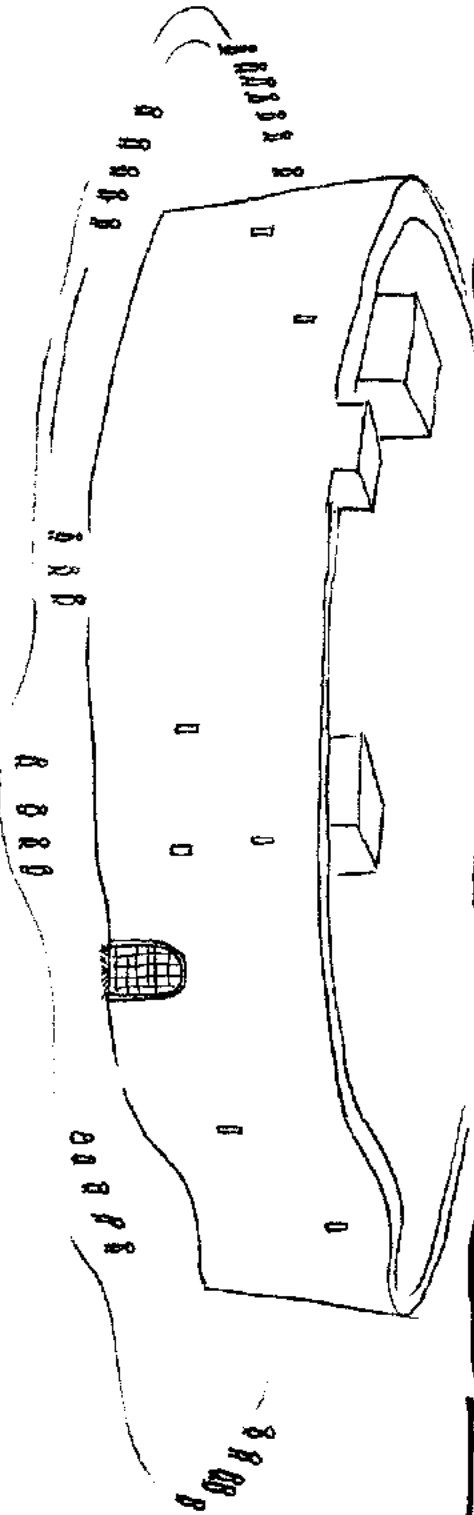


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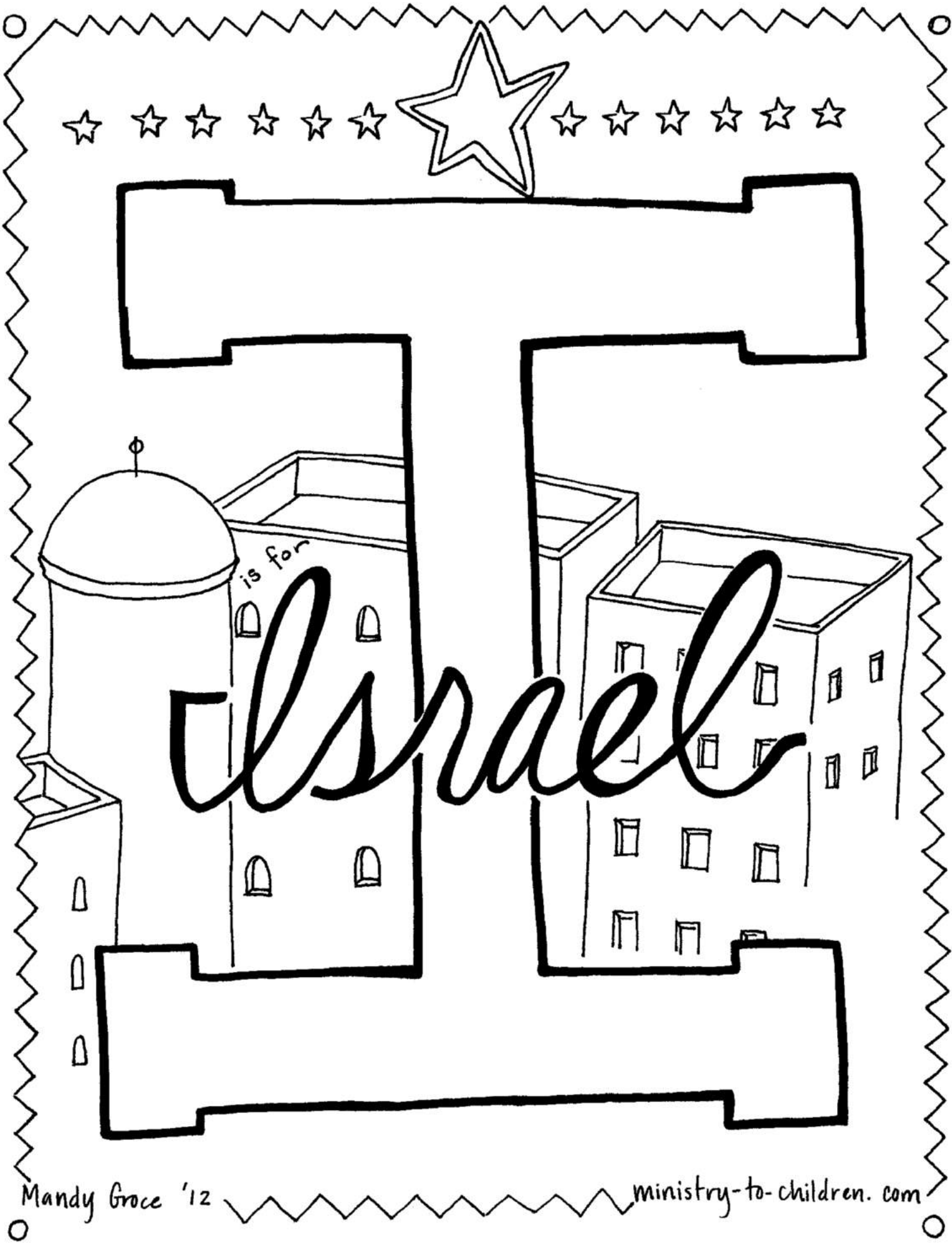
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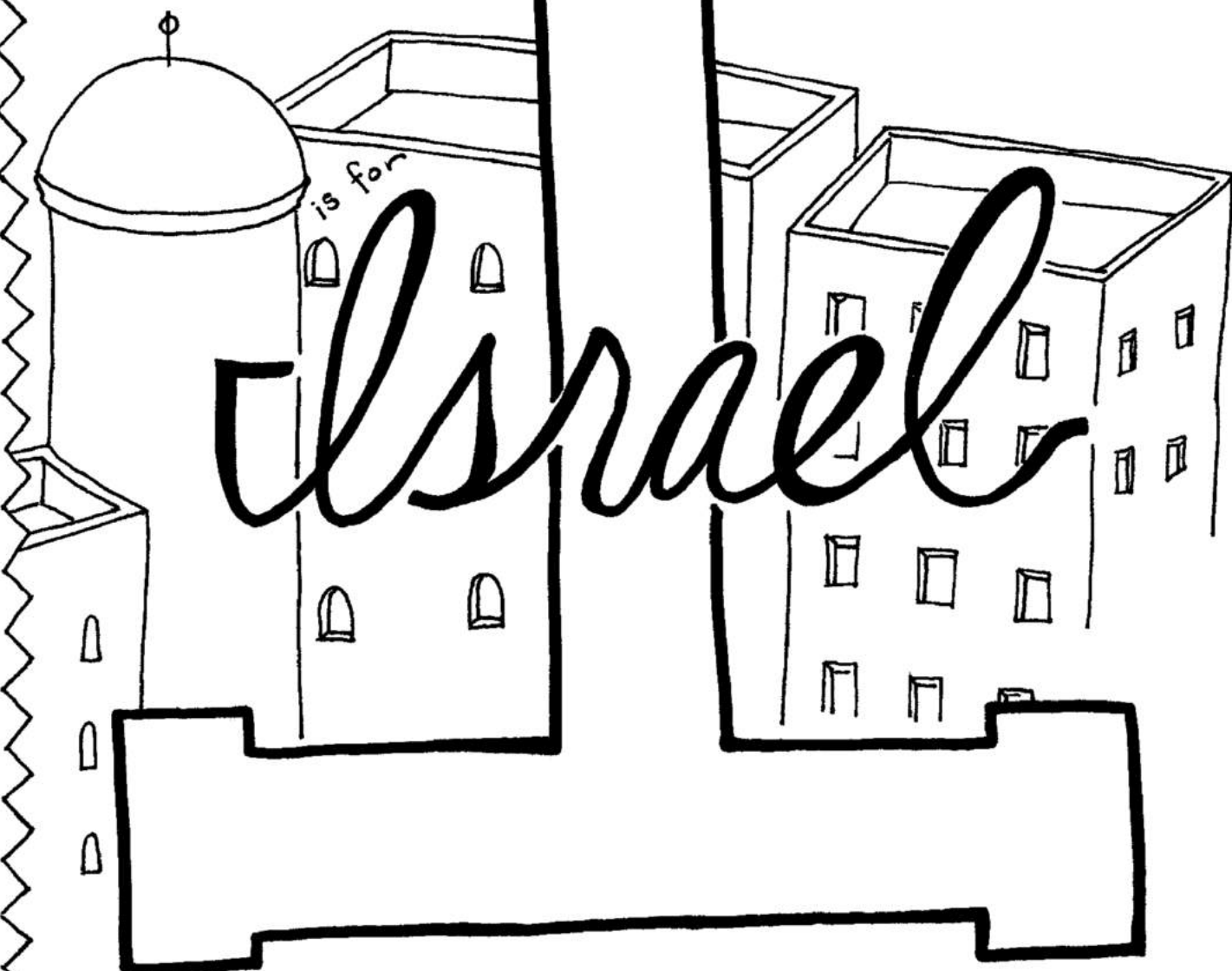


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May God bless you and continue to bless your ministry!

For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.” Joshua 4:23-24 NIV

