

## BE BIG

**THE AIM:** To grow more confident in God

### The aim unpacked

For Joshua, to follow in the footsteps of Moses took a lot of courage, and a lot of faith and reliance on God. For our young people, making a stand for Jesus can be equally daunting. In a world where ‘self-help’ and ‘self-confidence’ are thrust upon us from the media, it can be difficult to rely on God and to step out with the confidence that he gives.

## WAY IN



the GRID MAGAZINE

**WHAT:** reflection on comfort zones  
**WHY:** to introduce the idea that we all have a comfort zone we would like to stay safe in  
**WITH:** magazine page 68

- 1 Talk about what a ‘comfort zone’ is. Give an example from your own life, perhaps by demonstrating a time when you have been out of your comfort zone and why.
- 2 Hand out page 69 and invite the young people to reflect on the limits to their own personal comfort zones. Which of the scenarios would they find the hardest to do?
- 3 Ask if any of the young people have examples they would like to share of the experiences on the page, or of other times when they have had to step out of their comfort zone. Encourage them to explain how they felt about it, why they did it and whether they were glad they did afterwards.
- 4 Encourage them to chat further in twos or threes. If appropriate, explain that in this session they’ll be looking at how a character from the Bible stepped out of his comfort zone, with God’s help.



SCENE SETTER

**WHAT:** discussion game  
**WHY:** to introduce the idea of risk  
**WITH:** three copies of resource pages 70 and 71

- 1 Talk about the biggest risk you’ve ever taken yourself and how you felt before, during and afterwards. Ask the group what the biggest risk is that they have ever taken and how that felt.
- 2 Designate two leaders to be Victor the Wile and Villainous, and Trisha the True and Trustworthy. Give them a copy of the script from resource pages 70 and 71. Read it through, encouraging Victor and Trisha to give their advice each time. The young people should move to sit with the person whose advice they would follow. Then read out the consequences each time. Encourage Victor and Trisha to ham it up as much as possible.
- 3 Point out that we are much happier to take a risk if we trust the person asking us to take it. This activity showed that one person was more trustworthy than the other. Explain that in this session, they’ll be thinking about someone who had to take a huge risk.



THEMED GAME

**WHAT:** tag game  
**WHY:** to illustrate the idea of taking risks to win  
**WITH:** five trophies (paper cups or similar), large space

- 1 Divide the young people into teams of five. Designate two safe bases at either end of the room. Place five trophies in the centre of the room.
- 2 The aim of the game is for the team to move the five trophies into the safety of base two at the far end of the room within the set time limit. The team starts by standing in base one. Another person is ‘it’ and tries to stop them by tagging them – no one can be tagged in the bases. If ‘it’ tags them, they must return to base one; if they are carrying a trophy, they must put it back in the middle. When they have safely carried a trophy to base two, they must stay there and cheer on the others. For the first round, set the time limit to two minutes. You may want to shorten it in subsequent rounds.
- 3 Make the point that if you don’t venture out, you won’t ever win the trophies, even though there are risks involved. Get feedback on their thoughts.

# BIBLE EXPERIENCE



## LEVEL 1: CONNECT

**WHAT:** role play

**WHY:** to grow more confident in God

**WITH:** each verse of Joshua 1:2–9 printed on a separate card and numbered, resource page 72

- 1 Invite a volunteer to sit on a chair in front of the others. Introduce him as Joshua, using the script from resource page 72.
- 2 Divide the group into two teams. Tell one team that they must try to persuade Joshua to wimp out. The other team must persuade Joshua to cross the raging river and take hold of the Promised Land. Give the teams one minute to prepare and jot down a few ideas.
- 3 In turn, each team has one minute to try to convince Joshua they have the best idea. At the end of the time, the young person playing Joshua should choose which advice to follow. Say that this was a decision the real Joshua had to face. But he didn't have mixed advice—God gave him a pep talk that would see him through the tough times ahead.
- 4 Give out the verses on numbered cards and ask the young people to read them out in order. Say that this was God's pep talk to Joshua. Ask the young people to choose which piece of encouragement they think Joshua would find most useful. Say that when we face challenging times—even when the people we rely on let us down or disappear—we can have courage and be confident in God, just as Joshua did.
- 5 Ask the young people to think of a difficult change that they're facing at the moment, or will be facing soon—new things at school, a new activity, a house move or a change in their family or group of close friends. Encourage them to picture that situation and, in their minds, to give it to God, asking God to be with them as he was with Joshua.



## LEVEL 2: INTERFACE

**WHAT:** encouraging messages

**WHY:** to grow more confident in God

**WITH:** Bibles, magazine page 69, flip chart or whiteboard, mobile phones (optional)

- 1 Explain that Joshua is at a turning point. He could go forwards or backwards. God wants Joshua to lead the Israelites forward into the Promised Land. Will God be with him? Can they trust him?
- 2 Divide everyone into pairs and make sure each pair has a Bible. Assign one of the characters from 'Help!' on page 69 to each pair. Invite them to see what God says to Joshua in Joshua 1 that might give their character confidence too. Should they go forwards in faith or backwards into familiar safety?
- 3 Invite each pair to feed back what they have discovered. Write up the key verses on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ask, 'If you had to pick one verse to help you be confident in the future, which would you choose? Which verse would you choose as a challenge?'
- 4 Back in pairs, challenge the young people to put God's message to Joshua in text form in no more than 160 characters (including spaces). If they have their mobiles with them, suggest they send their version to someone they would like to encourage; otherwise, they can write it down on paper and give it to someone. Be sensitive to anyone who may not have a mobile phone, and also be aware of how distracting they could be for the rest of the session!
- 5 Explain that God's encouragement was for Joshua going into the Promised Land. There are other encouragements in the Bible that are directly for us—check out Matthew 28:20 to see that we are not alone. Challenge the young people in the next few days to text a friend who needs some encouragement to have confidence in God.



## LEVEL 3: SWITCH ON

**WHAT:** Bible study

**WHY:** to grow more confident in God

**WITH:** teen magazines, Bibles and concordances, resource page 73

- 1 Provide some teen lifestyle magazines and ask the young people to find examples of things that are supposed to give young people confidence, such as perfect make-up or great biceps.
- 2 Share their ideas. Discuss:
  - Which of these really makes you feel more confident deep down?
  - What would happen if they were taken away from you?
  - Would you have any confidence left if you had no nice clothes, money, and so on?
  - What can you think of that would give you confidence that outlasts all these temporary things?(Make it clear that it's not wrong to have any of these things, but that God wants us to build our lives on something longer-lasting.)
- 3 Explain that Joshua faced a crunch situation and had to decide whether to step out in faith or not. The Israelites were on the edge of the Promised Land, with the River Jordan to cross and a whole new land to conquer. Joshua was now the leader. What would give him the confidence to move forward instead of holding back?
- 4 In pairs, ask everyone to read Joshua 1:1–9 and discuss the questions on resource page 73.
- 5 Again, in pairs, invite everyone to read Joshua 1:10–18. Ask them how Joshua responded to his call and how the people reacted to him. Encourage the young people to share with their partner any issues they are facing that will require them to have the same confidence as Joshua.
- 6 Explain that the promises God made to Joshua in this passage were for a specific task. Can the young people find any verses in the Bible that are promises to us, which can give us confidence today? Some suggestions are Matthew 28:20 and Philippians 4:19.

# RESPOND



## MUSICAL

**WHAT:** composing  
**WHY:** to compose your own song  
**WITH:** musical instruments (optional), recording equipment (optional)

- 1 If members of your group play musical instruments, you might like to encourage them in advance to bring their instruments along to this session.
- 2 In groups of four or five, invite everyone to look again at Joshua 1:1–9 and pick out the verse or phrase they would most like to commit to memory.
- 3 Ask each group to make up a song based on the verse they have chosen. Suggest some different styles of music: a worship song, a rap, a children's song with actions, a Taizé-style repeated chant, or a tune they already know to which they can write new words. This will take some time. If one group finishes before the rest, they might like to record their song or make up a dance to accompany it. The songs could be used as part of a worship service with the rest of the church.
- 4 If the group isn't musical, they could make up a poem or song<sup>1</sup> without music and create actions to either a spoken version or a rap.
- 5 Alternatively, spend some time listening to and reflecting on one of these songs:

- 'Though I Feel Afraid' by Ian White
- 'Here We Are, Lord' by Noel and Tricia Richards and Gerald Coates
- 'I Walk by Faith' by Chris Falson
- 'We Shall Stand' by Graham Kendrick

### MORE ON THIS THEME:

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

- 11 *Help for the spies* *Joshua 2*
- 12 *Making a mark* *Joshua 3:1 – 4:9*
- 13 *The bigger they are...* *Joshua 6:1–20*



## PRACTICAL

**WHAT:** prayer walking  
**WHY:** to have faith in God and commit to him  
**WITH:** pebbles, permanent markers, grapes, strip of blue cloth or big bowl of water

- 1 Arrange the objects to represent a ground plan of Joshua's situation. Put the pebbles on the side of the room where the group is, the cloth or bowl representing water in the centre, and the grapes on the far side.
- 2 Ask everyone to think of a situation they are nervous about at the moment, where they feel they're being asked to step out of their 'comfort zone'. Invite them to take a pebble, representing the desert where Joshua faced his big decision. They should write a word or symbol on their pebble to represent their situation.
- 3 Encourage them to walk to the water, praying silently or out loud that God will be with them in this situation. Invite them to place the pebble into the water as a sign that they're leaving all the anxiety and doubt behind them.
- 4 Invite everyone then to walk over to the grapes. Invite them each to eat one as a sign that they trust that God's plans for their future are good ones. For Joshua, it was to enter a land where the grapes were so massive that it took two men to carry a bunch on a pole!
- 5 You might want to finish with a rounding up prayer, such as, 'Lord God, thank you for promising to be with Joshua. Thank you that he grew in confidence in you. Please be with us as we face our challenges, and help us grow in confidence, trusting in you. Amen.'

# 10



## CREATIVE

**WHAT:** putting yourself in Joshua's shoes  
**WHY:** to pray imaginatively  
**WITH:** large sheets of paper, Bible, Bible atlas (optional)

- 1 Give each young person a large sheet of paper and ask them to draw a map of where Joshua was at this point: a desert with the Hebrews' camp, the River Jordan, and the Promised Land across the river. (Consult a Bible atlas – the river runs roughly north to south and the people crossed from east to west.) The Promised Land is a wonderful place, with huge grapevines, beehives, cornfields, olive trees and other fruit. The desert is, of course, bleak and inhospitable, but it's familiar! Explain that the river is in full flood and looks impossible to cross.
- 2 The young people should draw a stick figure on the map by the edge of the river, on the desert side. Encourage them to imagine they're Joshua looking across the river and to write what they can see in all directions, and any words describing how they feel.
- 3 Read Joshua 1:2–9. Ask, 'If you were Joshua, how would that make you feel?' Encourage everyone to write or draw their feelings now.
- 4 Ask, 'What situation are you in that feels like this?' Suggest that they draw symbols of this situation on their map. Now read God's words again. How do they feel now?
- 5 Encourage everyone to share their pictures and reactions in pairs or threes.
- 6 Finish with a prayer, thanking God that he is with us always, in every new situation, as he was with Joshua. Pray specifically for any new situations facing your young people.



# COMES ZONES

**WHAT'S YOUR COMFORT ZONE? YOU KNOW – THE LITTLE CIRCLE OF SAFETY WHERE YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO DO, OR CROSS ANY SCARY LINES INTO NEW AND UNKNOWN TERRITORY... FOR WHICH OF THESE SCENARIOS WOULD YOU FIND IT HARDEST TO STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND RISE TO THE CHALLENGE?**

## **Bible bit Joshua 1**

Moses led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt into the desert, where they have now been for 40 years. But Moses, the well-respected and great leader, is dead. Joshua is now the guy in charge of the Israelites. They're about to cross into the land that God has promised them. So God gives Joshua a bit of a pep talk. He tells him to be big and brave, for God is with him. It's going to be a challenge, but with God on Joshua's side, his confidence grows.

**Would you go to a dangerous country as a volunteer?**

**Would you hand out flyers on the high street for a youth outreach event?**

**Would you go and talk to someone who doesn't have any friends?**

**Would you join a new club or team even though you don't know anyone there?**

**Would you sing or play in the worship band at church?**

**Would you try a new flavour of crisps?**

**Would you get up on stage at school to do a speech?**



# 10

Ask your leaders and people in your church...  
What gives you confidence in God?  
What are you trusting God for at the moment?  
When has God asked you to leave your comfort zone?

**THESE GUYS AND  
GIRLS HAVE BIG  
PROBLEMS.  
THEY'VE TEXTED  
YOU FOR HELP.  
WHAT PROMISES  
DID GOD MAKE  
TO JOSHUA THAT  
MIGHT BE WORTH  
PASSING ON  
TO THEM?**

**JED**

Our old youth leader's leaving and there's no one to take over, so I've got to lead the group till we get someone. The last one was so brill and I'm so rubbish, perhaps I should just leave the group?



**JOSH**

Get this – Mum says we have to move house and school next year and I won't see my mates again. It's going to be awful. How do I know it'll be OK?



**JANEY**

I'm being bullied at school so I've told Mum I'm ill and I've stopped going. Think she suspects something but I'm too scared to go back :(



**JESS**

I'm soooo worried. You see I've got to take over being netball captain and the last captain was soooo good I know I'll never live up to her and the team will hate me. Should I say I won't be captain? Help!



# RESOURCE PAGE

## USE WITH SESSION 10 WAY IN 'SCENE SETTER'

You are on an adventure in search of the lost gold casket of Oglipiglap, the legendary rich emperor. You are in constant radio contact with the base, but there seem to be two people giving you advice. One is Victor the Vile and Villainous; the other is Trisha the True and Trustworthy. Whose advice will you follow each time?

There's a wobbly rope bridge in front of you.

**Victor:** It's perfectly safe. Jump on!

**Trisha:** The rope is fraying. There's a much safer bridge two miles downriver.

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you are now dangling by your fingernails over a 1,000-metre deep ravine. You scramble up somehow and carry on.

If you followed Trisha's advice, you had a long, tough trek, but you're safe across the river now.

There's a large, grey mound ahead.

**Victor:** It's a sleeping elephant! Go a different way through those thorn bushes!

**Trisha:** It's just a rocky hill – keep going.

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you are now bleeding in a hundred different places and your hair is simply ruined, darling.

If you followed Trisha's advice, you had a steep climb up the hill, but you can see the trail ahead now.

You see a green area ahead of you.

**Victor:** It's just a bit of damp grass – you'll be fine. Keep going.

**Trisha:** It's a quagmire full of stinking mud and leeches. Go round the edge.

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you smell like a drawer full of old football socks and you are covered head to foot in slime. And you have a leech down your trousers.

If you followed Trisha's advice, you've had to battle with a snapper turtle and a disgruntled alligator, but they were no big deal and you're well on your way after stopping for a tasty barbecue of alligator steaks.

There's a cave in front of you.

**Victor:** Don't go in. Whatever you do, don't go in. There are vampire bats in this area...

**Trisha:** If you want to get to the treasure, you'll need to go into the cave.

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you're now very, very bored.

If you followed Trisha's advice, you're now fumbling down a dark passage in the rock with unpleasant crunching noises underfoot.

There are two levers in the rock face.

**Victor:** Pull the red one!

**Trisha:** Pull the blue one!

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you are now tied up in a net swinging backwards and forwards over a pit of scorpions.

If you followed Trisha's advice, a door in the rock face has opened slowly, revealing a dimly lit cavern ahead of you.

In front of you is the gold casket of Oglipiglap.

**Victor:** Grab it and run.

**Trisha:** It's a fake. Look behind the rocky ledge and you'll see the real casket hidden there.

*Who do you trust?*

If you followed Victor's advice, you have been arrested by the Antique Dealers' Guild for trying to sell a fake antique. You are languishing in jail and are fed up with the prison diet of cockroaches on dry bread.

If you followed Trisha's advice, you are now a multimillionaire and have invested your money in worthy causes all over the world, thus alleviating poverty and eliminating injustice on a global scale. You also have a very large jacuzzi!

# RESOURCE PAGE

USE WITH SESSION 10 BIBLE EXPERIENCE 'LEVEL 1 CONNECT'

## Joshua

Joshua. His dad's called Nun, but he can't help that, and up to now he has been Moses' right-hand man — like helping out when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. But now Moses is dead and Joshua is the new leader. Both Joshua and God's people have a choice to make. Will they go forwards or backwards? Just in front of Joshua is the raging River Jordan. On the other side of the river is the land that God has promised will be theirs — a home at last after all that wandering round the desert! But Moses is dead, so perhaps Joshua doesn't feel too confident about crossing the raging river and taking hold of the land. The Promised Land should be theirs, but the people already living there don't exactly know it yet, and there'll be lots of fighting and upheaval ahead. It's tough without Moses leading the way.

So here's the choice: Joshua could wimp out and tell the Israelites to find another leader, he could lead them back into the desert the way they came, or he could lead them on into the Promised Land.



## USE WITH SESSION 10 BIBLE EXPERIENCE 'LEVEL 3 SWITCH ON'

With a partner, read Joshua 1:1–9. Discuss and write down your answers to these questions:

- How is Joshua feeling about being the leader?
- How does Joshua hear these words of God?
- Why does God tell him so many times to 'be strong and brave'?
- Why does God give such clear instructions about studying the Law?
- Are these words just for Joshua, or is God saying them to us too?
- Have you ever been in a situation like this?
- Which of God's words to Joshua do you find most challenging?
- Which do you find most reassuring?