

# 13

Bible: Joshua 6:1–20

## THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

**THE AIM:** To be encouraged that God can overcome the mighty

### The aim unpacked

Here we see the people following God's command and being rewarded for doing so. In our lives we often come up against seemingly insurmountable problems or issues. Jericho would have been similarly daunting for the Israelites, but they followed God, took on the mighty and overcame them.

## WAY IN



### the GRID MAGAZINE

**WHAT:** problem pages

**WHY:** to think about issues young people face

**WITH:** magazine page 89

**1** Give out copies of page 89 and ask the young people to read the letter to Damien and his response.

**2** Ask the young people what they think about Matt's letter, and discuss their thoughts about Damien's advice to him.

**3** In pairs or threes, challenge the young people to fill in the blank 'Dear Damien' letters with other issues that young people face.

Once they have done this, invite them to swap magazine pages with another pair or three and write responses to each other's letters.

**4** Gather the young people back together and ask each pair to give feedback to the whole group on the issues that have been raised. (This can be a very helpful exercise in getting to know the issues your group is concerned about.)

**5** Explain that everyone has problems and issues in life and that, in this session, they will see how to deal with them. There's a much more effective way than listening to frauds like Damien!



### SCENE SETTER

**WHAT:** discussion

**WHY:** to let the young people express their SIPs – 'Seemingly Insurmountable Problems'

**WITH:** whiteboard or large sheet of paper

**1** On a whiteboard or a large sheet of paper, write up the heading 'SIPs – 'Seemingly Insurmountable Problems'.

**2** Discuss with your group issues and problems that they think young people face. (Encourage them to think globally as well as in their own country/culture.)

**3** Invite the young people to write their answers on the whiteboard or paper. Here are some ideas in case they are stuck: relationships – friends, family, image – clothes, hair, weight; school – work, exams, teachers; free time – social life; poverty – at home and globally. This activity will need to be handled sensitively as there may be members of your group who suffer with some of these issues. If so, provide an opportunity for some one-to-one time during your session.

**4** For further information on this whole topic, you could look at the websites for charities such as Save the Children, Christian Aid, Tearfund or ChildLine that offer help and advice on issues at home or abroad.

**5** Explain that in today's session you'll be looking at Joshua and the Israelites who had their own 'SIP'!



### THEMED GAME

**WHAT:** graffiti wall

**WHY:** to establish some of the big issues facing young people

**WITH:** large sheet of paper, art materials, games or bricks or boxes (optional)

**1** Paint the outline of a brick wall on a large sheet of paper – wallpaper is ideal (about 2 m by 2 m).

**2** As the young people arrive, explain that later they'll be thinking about how we can break down the walls or barriers in our lives that can hold us back. But first invite the young people to add graffiti to the wall on the subject of 'problems and issues' that young people face in today's world.

**3** Keep this on display and return to it at the end of the session. Invite the young people to pray for the situations that are listed.

**4** If you have a large group, have some games of giant Jenga or Legos® or Duplo bricks around for the young people to play with while they are waiting to add to the wall, or a pile of old shoeboxes that they can use to build a 3D wall.



## LEVEL 1: CONNECT

**WHAT:** poetry, drama and art

**WHY:** to be encouraged that God can overcome the mighty

**WITH:** magazine page 90, Bibles, graffiti wall (optional)

- 1 If your group did either the 'graffiti wall' or 'discussion' option from *Way in*, have another look at it together and see what problems and issues the young people have written. Clarify with them if necessary what some of the issues actually are. Then explain that Joshua and the whole of Israel had another 'Seemingly Insurmountable Problem' of their own.
  - 2 Read Joshua 6:1–20 aloud to the group, perhaps from the *Dramatised Bible* or a modern paraphrase. If your group likes acting, they could act out the events. Allocate people to be the Israelites, Joshua, the priests and the city/people of Jericho. Encourage the group to develop a football-style chant for the moment when the wall falls down.
    - 3 Give out copies of page 90. Ask for a volunteer to read the poem 'Up the wall'. In the light of the Bible verses you have just explored, invite the young people to think, either to themselves or discussing in pairs, about what the poem is saying.
      - 4 Discuss together what the Israelites did about their problem of entering Jericho. (They were obedient to God's instructions – although those instructions must have seemed a bit odd!)
        - 5 Conclude this activity by saying that we can do the same. When we face issues that seem too big for us to handle, we need to have faith and trust in God and ask him what he wants us to do.



## LEVEL 2: INTERFACE

**WHAT:** thinking, searching and discussing

**WHY:** to be encouraged that God can overcome the mighty

**WITH:** Bibles, small prize (optional)

- 1 Divide your young people into pairs and give each pair a pen, some paper and a Bible.
  - 2 Ask them to read Joshua 6:1–20 and write down all the numbers they can find in the verses. (There are numbers in verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16.)
    - 3 Challenge the pairs to create a 'giant' mathematical sum, using all the numbers and whatever equations they can think of. Give them a couple of minutes in which they must use all of the numbers and reach the answer '1' (or as close as they can). If your young people are not fans of numbers and struggle with this challenge, give them a minute and then use this as an example of the 'Seemingly Insurmountable Problem' Joshua was facing!
      - 4 Let the pairs share their sums and, if you wish to, offer a prize for the most creative or the closest equation to the answer '1'.
        - 5 Explain that Joshua and the Israelites were coming up against their first big obstacle in their conquest of the land God had promised them. But God had promised them that they would take Jericho, and had also told them how to do it. Say that we can come up against many obstacles, pressures and worries in our lives. Just as God helped the Israelites, he has promised to help us too. We can pray and ask God to help us, and he will. So when we're faced with difficult problems or situations, the answer, like the great mathematical sum, is '1' – God. We should be encouraged that God can overcome the mighty, as he did in Jericho, and he can also help us overcome our issues.



## LEVEL 3: SWITCH ON

**WHAT:** Bible study

**WHY:** to be encouraged that God can overcome the mighty

**WITH:** Bibles

- 1 In pairs or small groups, ask the young people to read Joshua 6:1–20. If they wish, they can also read verses 21–27 to find out what happened to Rahab.
  - 2 Invite them to list all the main characters in the narrative. Discuss their answers with the whole group. They should have: God, Joshua, Israelites, priests, the people of Jericho, and Rahab.
    - 3 Ask the pairs or small groups to think about what role each of these characters played – what they actually did during the events.
      - 4 For all of the characters, apart from God, they should now list how they think they were feeling, at these times in the story:
        - before anything happened
        - during the marching
        - when the walls came down
      - 5 Bring everyone together and obtain feedback on what emotions they believe were evidenced in the narrative.
        - 6 Now explore the emotions the story brings out in the young people. Ask them to think silently about the following:
          - How does the story make you feel about problems or issues in your life that you want to overcome?

# RESPOND



## MUSICAL

**WHAT:** writing improvised music and lyrics  
**WHY:** to understand that God can help us overcome issues  
**WITH:** musical instruments, soundproofed room!

- 1 Explain to the group that in the 1960s, protest music, such as the song 'We Shall Overcome,' was popular. The idea of this was to speak out against issues, often political, through words and music. Can the group think of any current protest bands or protest songs?
- 2 Remind everyone of this session's Bible verses. Now invite them to improvise a dramatic interpretation of the story through music. Drums, tambourines and cymbals would be ideal, and, of course, trumpets, if anyone in your group plays one!
- 3 Alongside this, another group could write some lyrics based on the Bible verses, to be read between bursts of improvised sounds or to accompany it. Be prepared for a lot of noise here and allow for freedom of expression!
- 4 Listen to the compositions and then pray, giving God thanks for helping us overcome our 'big issues.'

5 You could also sing a song together, based on today's theme of having confidence in God's ability to overcome the mighty, or God being with us in all of life's problems and dilemmas. Encourage use of the musical instruments and improvised percussion while you sing! Some suggestions are:

- 'Everyone Needs Compassion (Mighty to save)' by Reuben Morgan and Ben Fielding
- 'Blessed Be the Name of the Lord' by Clinton Utterbach
- 'Strength Will Rise as We Wait upon the Lord' by Lincoln Brewster



## PRACTICAL

**WHAT:** prayer wall  
**WHY:** to visualise how God answers our prayer  
**WITH:** roll of plain wallpaper or large sheet of paper

- 1 This is an ideal follow-up activity to the graffiti wall in the *Wai/In* section. Alternatively, start one now by painting a brick wall on a large sheet of paper – wallpaper is ideal.
- 2 Invite the young people either to read what they have already written on the wall, or to bring any problems they or others may have – anything they want help to overcome – and write them on the wall. If you used this activity as a starter, ask the young people if they want to add anything to the wall after seeing what God did to the walls of Jericho.
- 3 Explain that Joshua and the Israelites overcame a serious barrier in their lives by trusting and obeying God. Likewise, if we trust and obey God, we can face and overcome our problems. Like Joshua, it may be in a different way to what we expect.

4 Pray together for the items on the graffiti wall, asking God to overcome the problems. You can do this either in silent prayer or, if your group is confident enough to speak out loud, each praying for one item.

5 Leave the graffiti wall up for the next few sessions and take a moment or two each session to pray for each item, or, if there has been an answer to prayer, to cross out that item. You can also add more items. Eventually you will see that God is knocking down the 'wall' and overcoming the barriers in the young people's lives.



## CREATIVE

**WHAT:** drama  
**WHY:** to visualise a response to today's subject  
**WITH:** suitable props (optional)

- 1 If your group is large, you may like to split into smaller groups of four or six for this activity.
- 2 Ask the young people to give a brief account of the events in this session's Bible verses – just to refresh their memories!
- 3 Now give them an opportunity to create and act out a contemporary version of this story. These improvisations could explore the subjects of faith, trust and obedience to God. Encourage them to present a piece that has a problem situation that is resolved.
- 4 After they've had time to prepare, draw the group back together and watch any of the sketches that the young people want to share. Finish by praying, thanking God that he is there for us to trust, and that he will help us in all our problems.

### MORE ON THIS THEME:

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

- |    |                           |                         |
|----|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 10 | <i>Be big</i>             | <i>Joshua 1</i>         |
| 11 | <i>Help for the spies</i> | <i>Joshua 2</i>         |
| 12 | <i>Making a mark</i>      | <i>Joshua 3:1 – 4:9</i> |



## DEAR DAMIEN

(HE LOVES HIMSELF SOOO MUCH!)

Dear Damien

How you doin'? Me? I'm not doing so well at the moment. So many issues messing up my life. I guess I'll start at the beginning. First off – well, there's the 'parent problem'. As ever they're driving me nuts – don't like my hair, my clothes, my friends or my 'attitude' as they call it. In fact, I wonder if they like me at all some days! Being 13 is just so hard. Then all my mates tell me I'm becoming 'reclusive', just because I like to shut myself in my room and listen to my music. Ugh! Life! Please help, you are soooo cool!

Cheers, Matt

DEAR DAMIEN

PROBLEM:

FROM:

DEAR

ANSWER:

FROM DAMIEN

DEAR DAMIEN

PROBLEM:

FROM:

DEAR

ANSWER:

FROM DAMIEN

Hi Matt

This is the coolest dude on earth here getting back to a fellow 'life struggler'. Parents, eh? Who'd have 'em'? Still, hang on in there, mate. Stay calm, don't let them hassle you. Be yourself, they'll get used to it! And your mates – well, they should get some style, if you know what I mean – music is cool, music is mean, music is life!

Checking out,

Damien

DEAR DAMIEN

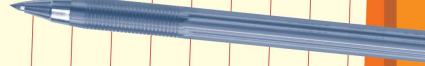
PROBLEM:

FROM:

DEAR

ANSWER:

FROM DAMIEN



## UP THE WALL

My head spins.

I feel like I'm going up the wall!

So many issues and problems to deal with.

My mind is running amok.

What to do,

how to do it,

when to do it?

All these questions, and thousands more, fill my head. Spinning and whirling, seemingly endless.

Who should I trust, who should I turn to?

Where in the world can I find peace?

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### Bible bit

Joshua 6:1–20

Jericho was the first big obstacle to taking the land that had been promised by God to Israel. It probably seemed like a huge insurmountable problem, but the Israelites did what God told them to do (even if it was a bit bizarre) and were rewarded for doing so.

Are there things in your life that seem too great to overcome? With faith and trust in God, those issues can come tumbling down, just like the walls of Jericho – though perhaps not always as easily or dramatically!

### BERLIN WALL

– a fortified wall surrounding West Berlin, built in 1961 to prevent East German citizens travelling to the West. Its demolition in 1989 marked the end of the Cold War. (Cold War – the hostile yet non-violent relations between the former Soviet Union and the United States and its respective allies, from around 1946 to 1989)



### JERICO

– a walled town in the West Bank in the Jordan Valley. It is regarded as the world's oldest town, with remains dating back to 8000 BC. According to the Bible, it was destroyed by Joshua after he led the Israelites back from captivity in Egypt.



### HADRIAN'S WALL

– a fortified wall built from the Solway Firth to the mouth of the River Tyne in the early second century AD as a defence against invasion by the Picts. It was built on the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian and marked the northern boundary of the Roman Empire.

(All of the above information is taken from the *Encarta World English Dictionary*, published by Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 1999)