**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# Jericho

### MEETING AIM

To discover that God used unexpected means to lead the Israelites to victory and do the seemingly impossible task of breaking down the walls of Jericho.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 6

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

God worked in unexpected ways to bring down the walls of Jericho. Joshua took a step of faith. It might have looked silly to others and felt impossible, but he listened carefully and followed God’s instructions, and as a result, the glory of victory could be given only to God. It’s worth noting that in order for the Israelites to inhabit the promised land, a whole city-worth of non-believers were killed. This is difficult to understand and explain, but we shouldn’t avoid it. Instead, if this comes up in discussion, let the children ask questions and wonder together why things might have happened the way they did.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Gather the children together for a time to catch up, build relationships and reflect on the week just gone. Have people share exciting news such as birthdays, trips or events. You might like to use the following question to start conversation as a light-hearted way into today’s theme: “Would you rather face an army of duck-sized horses, or horse-sized ducks?’

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** building materials such as junk or recycling, Jenga bricks, Lego bricks, building blocks or playing cards

Challenge the children to build a wall, as large and as strong as possible, using whatever materials you have brought with you. Make the link with the group that today’s passage is about a city called Jericho which was surrounded by a huge, strong wall – somewhat like a fortress.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a Bible

Ask the children to help you act the story out as you tell it. You may prefer to retell the story in your own words or read the story from a storybook Bible such as *The Lion Storyteller Bible* (Bob Hartman) or *The Jesus Storybook Bible* (Sally Lloyd-Jones). Alternatively, you could read Joshua 6 from a reference Bible with accessible language, such as the New Century Version or Contemporary English Version.

Assign half the group to be the walls of Jericho and stand in a circle facing outwards. Ask the other half to be the Israelites walking around the walls. You might like to choose some of them to be those allocated to play trumpets and have them make noise while they walk, while the others must remain silent. When you get to the part about the Israelites shouting, have everyone make as much noise as possible and then instruct your ‘walls’ to fall down.

After you have told the story, wonder with the group how Joshua might have felt following God’s instructions. You might also like to think with the group about other ways God could have chosen to give the Israelites the city of Jericho, and why he acted in the way he did. Emphasise with the group that the way things played out meant the Israelites couldn’t claim that it was their skills or abilities that made the walls fall down; instead they knew it must have been the result of God’s power.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Use the following questions as prompts for discussion. Encourage the children to think about what the passage might be saying to us and how it could be applied to our everyday lives. Try to encourage wondering, reminding them that there is not necessarily one right answer.

* How do you think the Israelites felt, walking around the wall?
* On a scale of one to ten, how confident do you think they were that this plan would work? Why?
* What do you think the people in Jericho would think about God when they saw the walls come tumbling down?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** pens and paper

Explain to the group that we don’t know exactly what the Israelites shouted at the wall, but we know that God commanded them all to shout. Ask the group if they have heard of the term ‘battle cry’ where soldiers would shout out a phrase or slogan as they headed into battle to explain the cause they were fighting for. In modern day, we may be more used to hearing chants and shouts at protests or at sports matches and events, both of which send a message to the supporters and opposition.

Encourage the group to create a ‘shout’: a short verse or chant, perhaps, with rhyme or rhythm, that might represent the kind of things the Israelites were thinking at the time. Children could do this in small groups or individually, and could perform their chants aloud or write them down for others to read.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** brick-shaped paper; lining paper; pens; glue

The walls of Jericho were a fortress around the city, and breaking through them might have felt impossible to the Israelites facing them. There may be things in our lives or the lives of those around us that we want to see happen, but feel impossible. Give the children brick-shaped pieces of paper and encourage them to write or draw on them things they want to see God do, even if they feel like big, crazy or impossible prayers. Encourage the children to stick their prayers onto a length of lining paper to create a prayer wall. Pray with the group for these things and then have them rip the wall up – like the walls of Jericho tumbled – as a way of asking God to answer their big prayers.

Alternatively, the group might like to keep the picture of the wall and store it somewhere, revisiting it from time to time to see what prayers God has answered. You could do both of these options by taking a photograph of the wall to keep, before ripping it up.

**EMMA DOBSON**

is an experienced children’s worker from west London.