**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 1 of 4

# Joshua

### MEETING AIM

To reflect on leadership and how we can be a leader as Joshua is to God’s people.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 1

### 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.

This passage marks a change for the people of God. Moses, who had led them from Egypt to the very borders of the promised land, has died and they now have a new leader – Joshua. Joshua was Moses’ apprentice, but now he has to step into leadership at a very uncertain time. There are difficult times ahead and Joshua needs to depend on God. God gives him the reassurance he needs to take on the task. This session focuses on helping the young people think about leadership and depending on God, as Joshua did.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the young people and spend some time chatting about their week. Ask the groups some questions, such as best chocolate in a box of Celebrations? How many colours in a rainbow? KFC or McDonald’s? Live by the sea or live in the mountains? Which house from Harry Potter would you be in? Would you rather be a giant hamster with a trunk or a tiny elephant?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper and pens

Ask everyone to imagine they are in a fairy tale: “You are a frog. You have been a frog for as long as you can remember, but you have a nagging feeling this is not who you really are. From your lily pad on the pond, you see all kind of spectacular things going on in the world – businesspeople creating exciting companies and making money, beautiful people appearing in adverts and singing on stages to thousands, people building families and laughing together as they grow old in ivy-clad cottages, adventurous types base-jumping, mountain-biking, swimming across lakes and hiking across Asia; doctors curing diseases, princesses and princes leading the people. One day the person of your dreams stops at the pond, looks at you, then says: ‘I’m going to break the spell and reveal who you really are…and the life you most want in the world.’ They kiss you on your warty, froggy nose. Who do you turn into? Where do you live and what is your life like? Ask them to write their answer on the paper and all reveal their answers at the same time. Go around to discuss answers.

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

Before the session, practise telling the story below yourself, or ask someone else in the group to prepare it. You could film yourself or someone else telling the story in an appropriate location and costume!

Explain that Moses has just died and God has appointed Joshua as the new leader of his people. Joshua was Moses’ apprentice as the Israelites – the people of God – wandered through the desert towards the promised land.

Once the story is over, ask the young people to give their first impressions on what they have heard.

What am I going to tell them? They’ll never believe me. They’ll say I killed him and then they’ll drag me into the street and stone me. Hmm, will they stone me or will they just leave me out in the desert for the vultures? Maybe they’ll…argh, whoa there, Joshua! Come on, enough with the negativity! He’d get angry to know you were thinking these things.

What did he say to you? What did he literally *just* say to you back up the mountain? What a day it’s been! Moses took me out into the countryside, chatting all the way. But I didn’t expect it to be the day he died. My friend. My mentor. Like a father to me, he was. And I *definitely* didn’t expect that God would come down and bury him! If that’s what happened, that is – they wouldn’t let me follow them further up the mountain. Now I’m returning home alone without him to announce that God says I must take over as leader. If they don’t believe me, I’m camel food.

I’d spent quite a lot of time with Moses, but I was still always a little nervous about these one-on-one walks. Sometimes he’d mess about jumping off rocks making bleating noises – I think he was trying to let me see that he was just a normal guy. But he wasn’t, everyone knew that; he was amazing. This morning he was serious, though. We reached the top and he started talking about how he wasn’t going to be around for ever. I didn’t believe it. He was old, but you’d never guess; he came across so full of life. But he said he was going to hand it all over to me now; he said how proud he was of my dedication to the cause and not letting circumstances affect my faith. I was left very shocked and extremely humbled.

I wasn’t expecting it at all, but his voice became deep and serious, almost menacing, so I knew he wasn’t joking. He said he wasn’t going to be around when the changes came about, when we took the promised land, so to speak. There was so much to do. It was important to obey what God commanded, to the absolute letter…and not forget anything under any circumstances. He was getting really worked up – almost shouting at me.

I wanted to get offended and ignore it all, but after everything we’d been through in the long desert years, I knew I had to respect him and give him the benefit of the doubt. He was normally right, after all. He started poking me in the chest – I think to wake up my passion and get a reaction from me. He told me that if I was going to achieve everything he started – his whole life’s work – if I was going to carry all his dreams through to reality, I mustn’t mess up or compromise. I couldn’t back out by being a coward. I had to stand up and keep hold of the vision, no matter how much abuse I might get for it.

“OK, OK,” I replied. ‘Calm down, old man!’ was what I was actually thinking, but what he was saying was true. I did need to be brave. To have courage. To know God’s presence is always, *always,* with me and to live like it. Talk like it. Act like it. *Lead* like it. There was an incredible sense of God’s presence as he spoke to me. It’s stayed with me too, since he died. I presume he’s dead. He hugged me and told me to wait while he walked with God. He hesitated, then said he didn’t think he’d be back. He had a far-off look in his eyes. Then he was gone. It was like a commissioning, I suppose. God wants me to finish what he started. God wants me to lead his people into the promised land.

First, I need to convince them of all this. OK. Deep breath. God is with me. Be strong and have courage. Don’t be afraid…right. Time to get going. I’ve got work to do.

*This story is produced using some material previously published in Grove Books booklet Y37* Mentoring and Young People *by Joel Toombs.*

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask someone, or a couple of people, to sum up the story. Use the following questions to start discussion:

* What is the main theme of this story for you?
* What advice do you have for Joshua regarding becoming all that he could be?
* What should Joshua do after this episode – what are the most important things for him to do in the coming days? How can he establish himself as a great leader of the Israelites?
* What is God saying to you through this story?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** paper; marker pens

Put the young people into pairs. Ask them to write a list of the top ten most important attributes that all great leaders must have. Once everyone has finished, discuss the different answers as a whole group. Then ask the following questions:

• Do most great leaders have all of these when they start out?

• How do they get these characteristics?

• How does it happen in the movies? Does it happen like that in real life too?

• How many of these characteristics do you personally have? How could you cultivate more?

• What does God hope you will one day will be like?

• What raw materials is God looking for in you in order to be able to develop you into all that you could be?

Ask the young people to imagine that they are a leader in their own community. What big idea could bring everyone more together? What characteristics would you need in order to be trusted (eg people need to feel listened to, they need a credible Christian to be inspired by, or they need a business leader to help them create income and employment in their neighbourhood).

What resources does your community need in order to thrive and become a ‘promised land’? This could be better public space, more jobs and investment, more time together, a common thing to be proud of as a community, more to do generally so there is less crime and violence.

Give the group (working alone, in pairs or all together) time to work out some of this and write down some ideas. If working as a large group, use large sheets of paper so that everyone can contribute. After a few minutes, get back together and share your thoughts.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** community ideas from ‘Creative response’; music and the means to play it

Put some worship music on. On their own or in groups, encourage the young people to reflect on their community ideas and to pray into those areas. Ask them to pray for provision from God but also for inspiration about how they could act or intervene themselves. If they can’t be a superhero to their community alone, how could they combine to start to meet some of the needs of their community? Pray for wisdom about this but pray mainly for the people who need God’s help. Pray for those in positions of power, politically (councillors and MPs), but also religious leaders, community leaders and other role models in sport, art or charity work.

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