Joshua the Conductor Lesson

Starting Line
Let’s look deeper into our most important character in the story, Joshua the conductor. The name Joshua is the original Hebrew for the name Jesus in the New Testament Greek. Our character Joshua is a representation of the savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, we created Joshua to be both strong and gentle. He does not force Peter to let Him have control, but He continues to pursue Peter through every trial. He is always available and loving, but He is also powerful enough to complete our salvation through His sacrifice on the cross.

Finish Line
As I learn more and more about the character of Christ Jesus, I am overcome with more certainty of the unbelievable price He paid for me—a sinner—someone who is not worthy of His love and sacrifice. I want to focus today on that sacrifice, and while I understand our students are young, we must not shy away from the truth of the cross where Jesus gave His life for us. I want students to begin to equate the sacrifice Jesus endured with the love He has for them. His death was a demonstration of God’s love for us. I want students to remember the cost each and every day in a way that will inspire their own personal thanksgiving and worship of Jesus.

Whistle Stops – Vocabulary
conductor
demonstrate
sacrifice
sin
punishment
obedient

The Right Track – Developing the Lesson through Scripture
Wow! This is one powerful scripture for this lesson! Take a look at Romans 5:8. I encourage you to read all of vs. 1–11, but we will focus on v. 8 for our lesson. I have presented the passage in three ways in the hope that children who are in various stages of learning and spiritual development will understand it.

1. But God demonstrated His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (NAS Bible)
2. God loved us so much and wanted to show us how much, so even when we did not love Him, his son Jesus died for us. (paraphrase)
3. Even though Peter did not love or accept Joshua, Joshua still gave His life to build the Bridge of Grace, long before Peter was created. Joshua did this because he and his father loved each train so much, even Peter. (Ask students who Joshua represents in the story. Make sure they understand the connection).

All Aboard! – Main Lesson
There are just a few things in life I find are really hard to understand. Things like, why do they call it a “toothbrush” when you use it to brush all of your teeth? Why not call it a “teethbrush”? That is just a silly example, but there is something I really have always had a hard time understanding and that is, why would Jesus die for me? I do not deserve it. I have done some
things that are not right, things that are sin. I have lied and disobeyed my parents; we all have.
So why would He die for us? And why did He have to die? Was there something else He could
have done? These are hard questions, but the answers are wonderful!

Jesus died for me and for you simply because He loves us. Our sin is like a bad sickness, and
if not treated it would kill us. According to God’s Word, the punishment for our sin should be
death. I know that sounds kind of dramatic, but it is the truth. We all deserve that punishment.
As to why Jesus had to die, the answer is simple: When Adam and Eve sinned long ago, they
also deserved the punishment of death, but instead of killing them, God killed an animal as a
sacrifice for their sin. The Bible tells us Jesus came to earth because the sacrifice of animals
was not enough. He allowed Himself to be sacrificed for us so that we could live in freedom and
without punishment forever.

I know “teethbrush” sounds really silly and still doesn’t make sense, but Jesus dying for me,
taking my punishment of death so I can live forever, makes me want to live for Him, tell others
about His love, do the right things, and be obedient to Him. Our scripture in Romans 5:8 shows
us why He did this.

Discussion Depot – Developing the Lesson through Questions
Instead of revisiting The Little Engine That Could Not for our questions and discussion, let’s look
again at Romans 5. I want students to focus on how God and His son Jesus proved their love to
us by the sacrifice they made. Please go back and read aloud Romans 5:6–11 to students.

1. In Romans 5:6, when does it say Jesus came to die for each of us? Does it say that we
were all good, godly, and super strong? What does it say we were? (ungodly and powerless,
weak)
2. If we are powerless, then can we save ourselves? Who is strong enough to save us? What
did Jesus have to do in order to save us? Why did Jesus have to be a sacrifice for our sin?
3. What comes to mind when you think about the cross? What did God prove to us when Jesus
died for us? (He proved that He loved us so much!) Should we love Jesus with everything
we have since He gave everything for us? How do you show your love to Jesus? (Allow
students to answer freely and creatively, while helping them to remember that obedience to
God’s Word is the simplest and best indicator that we love Him. See John 14:15.)

Cross Ties – Developing the Lesson through Activities
For all age levels:
Click below to download a printable coloring page that shows Joshua meeting Peter in the
storm. Have students look closely at Joshua and notice the shape he forms with his arms
extended (the shape of the cross). When I ask my four-year-old son how much he loves me,
he does this exact thing with his arms. Give each student a copy of the page to color. Then
ask students how much God loves them. Demonstrate this motion for them and have them do
exactly as Joshua is doing in the picture while saying, “THIS!!!! MUCH!!!!” Encourage them to
show this motion and share what they learned from the picture with their families at home.

Climbing Higher Activity
Let’s challenge students to express all the ways in which God loves them by using the alphabet
and a little creativity. In advance, prepare a cardboard cutout of the letter “S” (the bigger the
better). Paint or color it red. You may even use Superman’s “S” if you wish. (I would. I love
Superman!) Explain to students that your letter “S” stands for the word “Sacrifice.” Tell them that
when you think of the sacrifice Jesus made for you, it reminds you of how much Jesus loves you. Give each student a piece of cardboard, scissors, and paint or markers. Ask students to cut out the first letter of a word that reminds them of how much God loves them and then color it, being as creative as they wish. Allow each student time to present his or her alphabet artwork to the class. Ask students to share the word that reminds them of God’s love and tell why they chose it.

**Keep on Rolling – Developing the Lesson through Daily Application**

This homework assignment will require some effort, but will be well worth it in the end. Tell students to spend a day recognizing and participating in what it means to sacrifice. Have them go home and ask their parent or guardian to tell them what he or she has sacrificed in order to take care of them. Ask students to write these things in a journal with the letter “S” off to the side of each one. Next, have them think of something they can do to sacrifice for someone they love. Encourage them to be creative. Share examples by suggesting that they could sacrifice their mac and cheese for their brother, their spot in line for a friend, or their time by taking someone else’s turn to wash dishes. Our goal is to remind students to be thankful for sacrifice and learn to participate in giving of themselves for others.