

FALL QUARTER, YEAR 1 2026-2027 (Cycle 25)

The Soul of a Nation (Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel)

This quarter looks at Israel's entry into the Promised Land beginning with a study of Joshua Unit 1. Establishing Israel's presence in Canaan is as much a spiritual task as a military or political task, but Joshua is never able to establish unity for God's people on any of these levels. What Joshua leaves undone at the end of his life sets the stage for the period of Judges. The three lessons on Judges in Unit 2 highlight Israel's propensity to ignore God and God's ways. Living without God's law meant "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." In the five lessons of Unit 3 we meet Samuel, whose faithfulness to the Lord as both prophet and judge plays a pivotal role in Israel's history, and sets the stage for the glorious reign of King David. As God's anointed ruler, David is able to unite Israel geographically, politically, and spiritually. Noteworthy, too, is the contrast of David, who "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (1 Kings 15:5) against the backdrop of the people in the period of the judges, when "everyone did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

Fall UNIT I (JOSHUA)

Children: **Israel Finds a New Home**

Youth/Adult: *From Nomadic Tribe to Settled People*

Unit I explores Israel's transformation from a nomadic people to a nation state. To begin, God renews God's covenant with Joshua and a new generation of Israelites (lesson 1) in Joshua 1. In moving into the land (Joshua chapter 4), Joshua leads Israel to remember all the ways and times that God has provided for them, including crossing the Jordan (lesson 2). The core of the book (chapters 6-12) outlines Israel's systematic defeat and destruction of other nations. This issue is problematic as it has been used throughout the church's history to support imperialism and slavery. Lesson 3 offers an opportunity to unpack this violent narrative—the battles are not about Israel destroying other nations but about God fulfilling God's promise of land (Joshua chapter 11). While there is a thread of nationalism within the Bible, there is also a thread of universal love and acceptance, as represented by Rahab in Joshua chapters 2 and 6, and studied in lesson 4. Lastly, the book of Joshua ends with chapter 24 and Joshua concludes his life by imploring the people of Israel to remember their identity as the people of God, especially as they co-mingle with the inhabitants of the land.

	Lesson 1. Sept 6, 2026 The Covenant Continues	Lesson 2. Sept 13, 2026 Remember God's Actions	Lesson 3. Sept 20, 2026 Driving Out the Nations	Lesson 4. Sept 27, 2026 God's Compassion for Rahab	Lesson 5 October 4 Do Not Conform to the World
Scripture	Background Scripture: Joshua 1 Print: Joshua 1:1-11 Children: Joshua 1:1-11	Background Scripture: Joshua 4 Print: Joshua 4:14-24 Children: Joshua 4:14-18, 21-22	Background Scripture: Joshua 6, Josh 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deut. 7 Print: Josh. 11:6-9, 16-23 Children: Josh. 11:16-23	Background Scripture: Josh. 2; 6:16-25; Matthew 1:5; James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31 Print: Josh. 2:8-13, Josh. 6:16-17 Children: Joshua 2:8-13, Josh 6:16-17	Background Scripture: Josh. 23-24 Print: Josh. 24:15-28 Children: Joshua 24:14-19
Unifying Principle	Life can present us with ordeals that seem impossible to surmount. Where do we turn for strength and encouragement in challenging times? In	Without a sound legacy we may lack a sense of the principles and values we want to pass on to future generations. How do we pass on our heritage to future generations to give them a solid foundation? God	People will fight to defend or to gain resources, power, territory, or freedom. Is violence or war ever justified? Joshua led Israel in battle against the Canaanite	In situations of uncertainty, we do not know the source from which our help may come. Where do we turn for help in uncertain times? In return for her and her family's safety, the prostitute Rahab protected the	We may struggle to make the right decision when presented with difficult choices. What should we rely on to help us make the right choice? Joshua reminded the Israelites of God's

	commissioning Joshua to take the leadership role, God instructed him to be strong, courageous, and obedient to the law as God would be with him and grant him success in conquest.	instructed Joshua and the people to gather twelve stones from the Jordan River with which to establish a memorial of their successful crossing of the Jordan on dry ground.	nations in response to God's guidance and with God's promise of victory.	spies Joshua sent and assisted the Israelites in their conquest of Jericho.	faithfulness throughout their long history and urged them to make the radical choice to serve God rather than the world.
Teaching Strategies					
Spiritual Growth					
Life Application					

Lesson 3. Scripture Matrix:

Insert note in Scripture Matrix and perhaps also in Special Concerns: When reading Joshua, it is important to consider that it was written long after the people of Israel were settled in the Promised Land and in hindsight deeply regretted their neglect of God's covenant in favor of assimilating Canaanite culture and religious practices.

Fall UNIT II (JUDGES)

Children: **A Country Without a Ruler**

Youth/Adult: *Lacking Leadership and a Moral Compass*

Judges is a difficult book in the Bible. Directly after Joshua warns the Israelites to stay true to their faith and remember their identity, the people fall into apostasy, seemingly forgetting Joshua's admonition. When trouble ensues, they recognize their sinful ways, repent, and call on God. As soon as God intervenes to save them, they turn away. Lesson 6 addresses the cyclical pattern of apostasy, repentance, and divine rescue that repeats throughout the book of Judges and is exemplified in chapter 2. Lesson 7 gives an example of God's faithfulness in raising up leaders despite Israel's unfaithfulness (Judges chapter 3). Lesson 8 demonstrates the book's theme, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes," as depicted in chapter 17. Despite God's faithfulness, the people consistently fall back into religious impurity and lawlessness. The pattern of leadership in Judges highlights the fact that "Israel had no king," which then lays the rationale for Israel's petition for a king in 1 and 2 Samuel.

	Lesson 6. October 11 Choosing Evil	Lesson 7. October 18 God Remains Faithful	Lesson 8. October 25 Forgetting the Covenant
Scripture	Background Scripture: Judges 2 Print: Judges 2:1-15 Children: Judges 2:1-9	Background Scripture: Judges 3 Print: Judges 3:15-23, 30 Children: Judges 3:15-20, 30	Background Scripture: Judges 17 Print: Judges 17:1-6 Children: Judges 17:1-6
Unifying Principle	Life presents us with a myriad of opportunities to make wise choices. Will we choose obedience or disobedience? The people of Israel chose disobedience and were forced to face the consequences of defeat and distress.	When we are forced to face the consequences of bad choices, we seek deliverance from those consequences. From whom do we seek mercy in the face of consequences for our bad choices? God was faithful to raise up leaders to deliver Israel from their enemies despite their unfaithfulness.	We sometimes forget the promises we've made and fail to honor them. Will we choose to remember and honor the promises we make? Despite God's faithfulness, the people consistently fell back into religious impurity and lawlessness instead of honoring their covenant.
Teaching Strategies			
Spiritual Growth			
Life Application			

Fall UNIT III (1 and 2 Samuel)

Children: **Samuel Does it All**

Youth/Adult: *Samuel the Prophet, Judge, and King-maker*

Samuel is an exemplary leader. Throughout Israel's history and into the NT, Samuel is lifted up as an example of one who walked faithfully with God (Jer. 15:1, Heb 11:32). Lesson 9 introduces Samuel (1 Sam. 3) as one who responded to God's call at an early age. Lesson 10 (1 Sam 4) reflects Israel's continued struggle for control of Canaan, but there is both spiritual and political significance to the Philistines' capture of Israel's sacred Ark. In Lesson 11 (1 Samuel 7) the Ark is recovered and marks an occasion in which Samuel shows his capacity to serve as God's prophet and judge through calling Israel to spiritual renewal and military readiness. Lesson 12 brings the study to a pivotal moment in Israel's history (1 Samuel 16) as Samuel clandestinely anoints David as God's chosen king. The unit closes with a leap forward in history to the time of David's coronation as king and his capture of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5), which will form the seat of worship and government for Israel from that day forward.

	Lesson 9. Nov 1, 2026 Samuel Hears God's Call	Lesson 10. Nov 8 The Ark Is Captured	Lesson 11. Nov 15 Samuel as Prophet and Judge	Lesson 12. Nov 22 Samuel as King-Maker		Lesson 13. Nov 29 (Advent 1) David's Coronation and Capture of Jerusalem
Scripture	Background Scripture: 1 Sam 3:1 – 4:1 Print: 1 Sam 3:8-20 Children: 1 Sam 3:1-11; 19-20	Background Scripture: 1 Sam 4:2-7:2 Print: 1 Sam 4:12-22 Children: 1 Sam 4:14-19, 20, 22	Background Scripture: 1 Sam 7:3-17 Print: 1 Sam 7:3-11; 15-17 Children: 1 Sam 7:7-11, 5-17	Background Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:10 -16:13 Print: 1 Sam 16:4-13 Children: Sam 16:4-13		Background Scripture: 2 Sam 5:1-6:23; 2 Sam 24:18-25; Judges 1:21; Josh 15:63; 1 Kings 15:5 Print: 2 Sam 5:1-12 Children: 2 Sam 5:1-6, 11-12, or 1-12
Unifying Principle	Sometimes other people recognize our potential before we see it in ourselves. Who can help us realize our life's purpose? Through the help of Eli, Samuel learned that it was God calling him for a special purpose and he accepted the call.	Poor leadership often has dire consequences for the whole community. What consequences do we face because of poor leadership? The Ark of God was captured by Israel's enemies as a direct consequence of the poor leadership of Eli and his sons and a sign to the people that the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel.	In the wake of a national or communal crisis, people look for wise and capable leadership. What qualities of leadership can lift a community out of crisis? In 1 Samuel 7, God provided Israel with the wise and faithful leadership of Samuel as prophet and judge, calling Israel to spiritual renewal and military readiness.	Sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where we need to replace an incapable leader. Based on what criteria should a new leader be selected? In 1 Samuel 16, Samuel listened to God and obediently and carefully followed God's instructions in selecting among the many sons of Jesse the one whom God had chosen to anoint as King to replace Saul. (Matrix: In 1 Samuel 10:15:1-35: a disobedient king is rejected by God.)		People depend on visionary leaders for the political and spiritual stability of their nation. How is visionary leadership established? David's coronation as king and his capture of Jerusalem established his place as a visionary leader for the sake of Israel's political and spiritual stability.

Teaching Strategies						
Spiritual Growth						
Life Application						