

Grandparent Retreat: Building Memories

RETREAT MODULE INTRODUCTION

This Grandparent Retreat is designed for older adults along with elementary age children and younger youth. The retreat can be adapted to use as a You & Me Camp with adults, children, and youth by not using the grandparent/grandchild titles. It is designed as an opportunity to gather across the generations exploring and discovering together while building memories through a variety of activities.

Purpose

The intent of this grandparent & grandchild experience is to provide an opportunity to spend time growing together across the generations, learning, playing, sharing, discovering, and exploring God's word and world. This retreat provides a chance for grandparents to spend time with grandchildren, getting to know them better, sharing memories together and building new memories. The hope is to also provide the chance to explore together and build upon a relationship that might feel different in other settings with other family members around or across a distance. It is designed to meet campers where they are on their faith journey, both young at heart and younger.

Leadership is encouraged to shape the retreat to fit your needs. A sample schedule is provided as a starting point for planning. Optional activities are available to plug in wherever needed to supplement your retreat as time allows.

Why Retreat

A retreat refreshes and revitalizes, taking us out of the daily grind of our normal lives and provides an enjoyable breathtaking experience. Retreats are important for our minds, bodies and souls. They provide a restful setting, experiences in the out-of-doors, time exploring God's Word, and activity that engages us in community - rekindling and deepening relationships with one another and with God.

Why Retreat at a Camp or Conference Center

The setting of a camp or conference center enhances the experience of God spiritually, mentally, and physically. This setting lets us step away and encounter a place of wonder and discovery, rest and renewal. It opens up an opportunity for individuals and groups to be outdoors connecting with one another, creation, and the Creator.

Shared Leadership

Team leadership is ideal, spreading out the work load and sharing in the ministry. There is joy in hearing different voices and in equipping others to serve alongside one another. The community that is built can overflow into other ministries as well as into other retreats in the future. This model envisions the inclusion of members of a team with varying gifts.

Flexibility is the Key

Be flexible throughout your retreat, giving the Holy Spirit space to enter into the retreat experience and community being built. Activities are designed for both inside and outside (weather permitting) with opportunities to spend quality time in the environment of the camp or conference center, especially outdoors.

What You Will Find

Here is what you will find in the module to assist in planning your retreat:

- List of supplies/resources
- Sample schedule
- Song suggestions
- Additional resources
- Options like adapting for various sized groups
- Spaces of free time to just relax or participate in some of the activities provided at the camp or conference center
- Scripture readings are provided for convenience - leaders may use other biblical translations and/or invite participants to bring their own Bibles

Planning a Retreat

1. Create a team to help plan, administer and lead the retreat:
 - Make reservations at the camp or conference center

- Develop a registration form and process
- Arrange travel for leadership and participants
- Design a schedule with gatherings, activities, meals, and rest
- Gather supplies needed
- Consider any safety concerns especially for your group at this location
- Invite leaders to assist before, during and after the retreat

2. Get the Word Out:

They say that the average person needs to hear and/or see something 7 times before it is ingrained in their memory. That means you need to share the invitation for your retreat in as many places as you can, in as many forms as you can.

- Identify your audience by determining who should be invited to participate
- Work backwards from your retreat date to calculate required deadlines for invitations, registrations, and advertisement prior to the retreat
- Use newsletters, flyers, bulletin inserts, bulletin boards to get the word out
- Include an informational flyer with the registration form
- Use email notices, social media and websites to advertise
- Follow-up as registration dates get close with reminders to register
- Confirm registrations and include a what to bring list
- Build excitement as you send a reminder closer to the retreat date

3. Retreat Schedule:

Begin with the provided sample schedule and adjust it to best meet the needs of your group. Don't forget to include meals and free time so there is rest in the midst of activities.

4. Evaluation:

Follow-up after the retreat, with a paper, electronic, or verbal evaluation. Ask what was most meaningful, least meaningful, what might be changed for a next retreat. This will provide you with an overall sense of how the retreat was received, as well as notes for any future events.

Use of Space

- Inside & outside – take advantage of the outside space as well as the various activities provided at the camp or conference center
- Safe space for your retreat – both physically in your location as well as for the conversations, interactions and experiences
- Worship space – remember that worship is a central part of our community; keep familiar rhythms while at the same time introducing new ways of worshipping in a different setting
- Small groups – create a safe and welcoming space for sharing; invite all voices to be heard; instill respect for various opinions to be voiced and heard
- Special needs – consider what hearing, sight, mobility etc. needs exist in your group; be inclusive with all of your spaces and adapt activities as necessitated

Gathering in Community

- Gather in circles when possible – around a table, standing or sitting, circles provide a sense of community; we can see one another's faces, listen to and hear one another better
- Music – select songs that are easy to sing, and have word sheets or music sheets available; introduce new songs by teaching them and listening to the music before singing

Provide Hospitality

Hospitality is important for all participants to have a comfortable and grace-filled experience. Consider what simple things will make people feel welcome and comfortable.

- Hospitality area – provide water/beverages and snacks; find out whether the camp or conference center can provide this or whether you will need to bring them
- Locations – provide maps and information on where everything is located; consider a tour or scavenger hunt for your group to learn where to find locations for the retreat; good signage and clear directions can make a big difference
- Get acquainted – everyone may not know everyone else, so assume that you need name tags and activities to get to know one another
- Safety – bring first aid kits, safety equipment and instructions for any special activities

- Schedule – make copies available for those who wish to have a printed schedule of the retreat with meeting locations and times.
- Greeters – these welcoming faces are necessary for anyone who is unable to attend the entire retreat and coming for only part of it; be sure to have someone who will greet them and help them get settled in when they do arrive; also be sure to welcome them into the group and fill them in on what you are doing as they join the retreat in progress
- Participation – encourage everyone to fully participate and to share concerns with leadership if they are not comfortable with certain activities; most activities can be adapted to meet the needs of your group
- Be aware – there may need to be some adjustments made to include those with mobility, dietary, hearing, etc. concerns for your particular group; ask the questions during planning in order to address these to the best of your ability

Openings & Closings

The strength of your retreat is often determined by how you start and finish. Open strong with an organized plan for the retreat, including opportunities for everyone to get acquainted/re-acquainted and to build community.

Closing strong can wrap up the experiences of the retreat and encourage participants to take home what they have discovered to share with others. Shape your closing with a summary of the experiences you have shared and leave space for goodbyes.

Above all, have an amazing, fun-filled and God-filled experience playing in creation, exploring God's word, enjoying activities, sharing experiences and building community in the beauty of your camp or conference center.

Blessings on your retreat experience!

Sample Schedules

Sample Schedule for a Two Night Retreat = a couple hours/ a full day/ a partial day

For example – Friday night/ All day Saturday/ Half day Sunday

Day 1 (a couple hours)

Welcome & Introductions

Get Acquainted Games

Meal

Introduction to the Theme & Activity

Evening Gathering

- Star Gazing - Star watching/Constellation Cards
- Campfire
- Evening Closing

Day 2 (full day)

Breakfast – table tents

Morning Gathering

- Bible Story Memories & Thumbprint Heart Glass Magnets

Nature Hunt

Project - Paper Bag Memory Book

Lunch

Project - Memory Box

Option to participate in Camp Activities provided and led at your site or choose crafts from the optional activities, or a combination of both.

Meal

Evening Gathering

- Game Night/Movie Night/Carnival Games/Giant Games
- Campfire
- Evening Closing

Day 3 (partial day)

Breakfast

Craft - Picture Frames

Morning Gathering

- Bible Story Memories & Memory Stones

Closing Gathering

Sample Schedule for a one night retreat - One full day/ one partial day

For example - Saturday all day & Sunday half day

Day 1 (full day)

Welcome & Introductions

Get Acquainted Games

Meal

Introduction to the Theme & Activity

Morning Gathering

- Bible Story Memories & Thumbprint Heart Glass Magnets

Nature Hike/Scavenger Hunt

Project - Paper Bag Memory Book

Meal/Lunch

Project - Memory Boxes

Option to participate in Camp Activities provided and led at your site, choose crafts from the optional activities, or a combination of both.

Meal/Dinner

Evening Gathering

- Game Night/Movie Night/Carnival Games/Giant Games
- Star Gazing - Star Watching/Constellation Cards
- Campfire
- Evening Closing

Day 2 (partial day)

Breakfast

Craft - Picture Frames

Morning Gathering

- Bible Story Memories & Memory Stones

Closing Gathering

Supplies

General Supplies:

- nametags
- first aid kit
- emergency contact forms
- pens & pencils
- markers
- crayons
- scissors
- glue sticks
- digital camera with ability to print photos out for Picture Frame activity
- hot glue gun & glue sticks

Get Acquainted Game & Introduction to the Theme:

- a variety of stones, sizes, shapes, and colors, small enough to hold in your hand – 1 per person
- grey or light brown construction paper, cut into stone shapes in advance (1 or 2 per sheet) – 6 to 8 stones per family group

Constellation Cards:

- index cards (white or colored) – can be cut in half – 12 per set of cards
- hole punch – to connect the set of cards
- constellation template in Appendix C– printed in advance - 1 sheet per set of cards
- scissors
- glue sticks
- push pin/tack (to start the holes) – 1 per family group
- large nail to poke holes – 1 per family group
- key ring or binder ring – 1 each per set of cards
- ~6”x 6” piece of foam, ~1” thick - per family group

Postcards:

- postcards from template in Appendix C, printed in advance
- index cards or paper
- markers

Campfire Treats:

- s’mores – marshmallows, chocolate bars, graham crackers, roasting sticks
- banana boats – banana, chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, foil
- campfire cones – foil, ice cream sugar cones, chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, raspberries or strawberries (optional)

Night Activity:

- Game Night – a variety of boardgames (games from past generations like Candyland, Checkers, Mousetrap, Apples to Apples, Yahtzee)
- Movie Night – popcorn, treats, DVD movies & equipment to view, that appeal to children through adults (i.e.: “UP,” “Cars,” “Toy Story 1,” or the Curious George, or Dr. Seuss Movies).
- Carnival Night – booths/games made in advance from simple supplies, see Appendix C for ideas
- Giant Games Night – oversized games the retreat center/camp has, made in advance, or purchased, see Appendix C for suggestions

Bible Story Memories - Part 1:

- script from Appendix C, printed out in advance
- sand or dirt on a cookie sheet/box or outside where you can tell the story on the ground
- 12” long blue felt “river” for the Jordan river (cut in half)
- a small jewelry size box for the “ark” with toothpicks added on the sides for the poles
- two pieces of wood to represent the priests (small wood blocks or half of a tongue depressor)
- small pieces of wood to represent the people
- 12, 1”-2” small rocks
- a video is available to watch in advance which demonstrates how you might share this story (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R_caUSLVfEuxJpBWX0LJAUv4r4dDfbnj/view)

Bible Story Memory Activity 1 - Thumbprint Heart Glass Magnets:

- bright white cardstock – 1 per person
- colored washable ink pads – 1 per family group or share
- extra-large clear glass gems (without any iridescent coating or finish) – 1 per person
- scissors
- Mod Podge (or another clear drying glue)
- paintbrush – 1 per family group
- craft magnets – 1 per person/project
- hand wipes for inked thumbs

Bible Story Memories – Part 2:

- copy of the script from Appendix C, printed out in advance
- a large, long piece of blue fabric to represent the Jordan river
- markers or chalk

- 12, 6” wide stones (collected or made from lunch bags filled with newspaper and shaped into rocks)
- ~3’x3’x2’ cardboard box to be the ark of the covenant (or you can pretend to carry a box)

Bible Story Memories Activity 2 – Memory Stones:

- stones big enough to hold in your hand and write on– 1 per person
- permanent markers

Nature Hunt:

- camera to take pictures of family groups along the hike
- ability to print out the 4.5” x 4.5” pictures to fit in the picture frames crafted later
- Nature Hunt cards from template in Appendix C, printed in advance
- paper lunch bag, if collecting items – 1 per family group

Paper Bag Memory Book:

- paper lunch bags– 4 per person
- paper hole punch
- 12” long ribbon or yarn – 1 per person
- scissors
- markers, crayons

Memory Box:

- ~6” x 6” x 12” box with lid- 1 per person
- contact paper or wrapping paper to cover box
- stickers, gems, foam shapes (decorations for outside)
- markers
- glue

Picture Frames:

- popsicle sticks or tongue depressors to make a square frame – 4 per person.
- fast drying glue or hot glue gun
- small gems or craft foam shapes to decorate frame
- magnets for the back

Closing Session:

- memory boxes and lanterns (made earlier)
- hand shape die-cuts - 1 per person
- marker or pen

Supplies for Optional Activities

Suncatcher:

- clear Elmer's glue (white Elmer's dries cloudy and yellows in the sun)
- glass gems (marble-like with a flat side)
- flat glass beads (i.e.: butterflies, hearts) optional
- plastic container lids
- ribbon, yarn, or fishing line

Camp Lanterns:

- 8 oz. mason jar – 1 per person
- clear glue or modge podge
- paint brushes
- stickers or words cut out – nouns or adjectives that describe individuals (i.e.: funny, happy, fun, smiles, grandpa, grandma, grandchild)
- votive candle (suggest battery operated)
- 1' of bendable wire, for handle- 1 per person

Other Activities & Games:

- rocks collected in the area or purchased

Mission Experience:

Greeting Cards:

- 8.5" x11" white cardstock, cut in half -1 per person
- markers, gel pens
- stickers
- invitation size envelopes

Stockings for Seniors (or similar ministry):

- Christmas stockings or decorated bags, sized to fit the items donated
- hard candies
- puzzle books
- chapstick
- lotion
- hand sanitizer
- fun items
- stationary for writing notes or letters
- snacks
- ornament

DAY 1

Welcome & Introductions

Welcome everyone and provide information on how you will spend your time together. Share any rules and schedules to help everyone feel comfortable and safe. Introduce the leaders and provide nametags for everyone.

Get Acquainted Game (10 -15 minutes)

Supplies: a variety of stones (sizes, shapes, and colors; small enough to hold in your hand) - 1 stone per person

1. Place the stones in the center of your space and invite everyone to choose a stone.
2. Invite the family groups to introduce themselves together with the grandparent sharing first, then the grandchild:
Name?
Where you are from?
Why did you pick the stone you did?
3. Leaders should start by introducing themselves to show an example of the introduction.
4. You might invite them to hang on to it as a memory stone of this time together.

Introduction to the Theme – Stones

Say: I wonder what was different among the stones that you have all chosen and are holding? (sizes, shapes, colors, who is holding them)

Say: Everyone of us is different too. While we all are special and loved by God. We all look different, even family members look a bit different from one another. We are different heights, ages, sizes and colors too.

Say: I wonder what is common among the stones that we just chose to introduce ourselves? (natural, made by God, found outside, hard)

Say: We all have things in common too. I wonder what kind of things we all have in common? (we all came to camp, are grandparents or grandchildren, human beings)

Say: All of us in this space are different from one another and also have some things in common. During our time together we will learn more about one another and build memories of being together in this special place.

Introduction to the Theme – “Building Memories” (10-15 minutes)

Say: The theme for our time together is “Building Memories”. We build memories by sharing the story of things we did in the past, the people we shared our time with and what we are doing together right now, today. Often, we mark those memories so that we can remember and share those stories again and again.

I wonder what are some ways that we mark our memories?

- photographs
- saving mementos
- filming a video
- writing down the story – letters, email, storybook
- monuments or markers

I wonder how God’s people in the Bible shared and marked memories?

- storytelling – oral tradition across the generations
- stones (we will learn more about this soon)
- altars and monuments (carved stone)
- naming places

I wonder how we use stones to mark memories today?

- steppingstones to show us a path
- monuments as reminders of people & places
- trail markers to guide us
- stacks of stones to show the way (called cairns)

Say: During our time together, we will discover how God is with us every step of the way as we build memories and share our story with one another and across the generations.

Introduction to the Theme Activity – “Steppingstones: Telling our Story” (15-20 minutes + 5 minutes each per family group)

Supplies: construction paper (grey or light brown) – cut into stone shapes *in advance* – 6-8 stones per family group, markers

1. Working in family groups, take paper steppingstones and write or draw significant family memories, stone by stone. Begin with birth dates, then add significant events in both the lives of grandparents and grandchildren. You can list several per stone, especially those events that overlap, like grandchildren’s births, family gatherings, marriages, deaths. Consider events like moves, vacations, first day of school, new pet etc. (you can add other dates or just list in order of their occurrence). Allow 10-20 minutes to complete.
2. After the events are shared on the paper stones, invite all the family groups to lay them out in order steppingstone to steppingstone. Move from group to group and invite each family group to share their family story with the other groups. Average of 5 minutes per family group, total time depends on your group size. Encourage the kids/youth to help tell the story along with the adults, so all voices are heard.

Alternative Gathering - Space for Grandparents to Connect

Create a time for grandchildren to participate in an activity while the grandparents chat about “grand parenting.”

- Introductions – Name and how many grandkids?
- Greatest joy of grand parenting?
- A challenge of grand parenting?
- What are you most looking forward to at this retreat/camp?

Note: Keep in mind that some grandparents may be serving as parents, their experiences may be different. It will be helpful to share the joy and challenges of that as well.

During this time children/youth would be supervised nearby playing games, listening to a story, etc. Suggestions for stories are in the appendix, you can also encourage teams of grandchildren to work together to build with stones, sticks, and other natural items to reinforce the building theme. Invite teams to share what they have created with one another and then perhaps with the grandparents following their gathering.

Evening Session 1

Might include: star gazing, campfire snacks, campfire songs & stories.

Constellation Cards (15-20 minutes)

Exploring the night sky is a fun activity at camp and gives grandparents a chance to share star gazing memories and stories with their grandchildren. These constellation cards are a tool to assist in spotting major constellations in the night sky. A set of cards could be made by each camper or a set for each family group.



Supplies:

- index cards (white or colored) – can be cut in half – 12 per set of cards
 - hole punch – to connect the set of cards
 - copies of the constellation template – 1 per set of cards, printed in advance
 - scissors
 - glue sticks
 - push pin/tack (to start the holes) – 1 per family group
 - large nail to poke holes – 1 per family group
 - key ring or binder ring – 1 each per set of cards
 - 4" x 6" piece of ½" foam – 1 per each set of cards
1. Punch a hole in each of the 12 index cards to form a “book” with the key ring/ binder ring to keep them together.
 2. Cut out each of the constellations from the template and glue 1 of them on each of the cards.
 3. Place the cards on top of the foam.
 4. Using the push pin/tack make a hole where each star of a constellation is marked. Then take the nail and enlarge the same holes.
 5. Hold the card up and see what the constellation looks like compared to the night sky.

Now you have a guide to remind you of the various constellations normally in the nighttime sky. In the appendix find links to various star gazing sites to assist in identifying constellations in the night sky.

Campfire Snacks

Supplies:

- campfire
- roasted marshmallows- marshmallows and roasting sticks
- s'mores – marshmallows, roasting sticks, chocolate bars, graham crackers
- banana boats – sliced banana in the peel, mini marshmallows, chocolate chips wrapped in foil and laid in the campfire coals till it all melts, long metal tongs
- campfire cones – long metal tongs, ice cream cone filled with fruits (strawberries, raspberries, banana), mini marshmallows, tiny Reese's cups or chocolate chips wrapped in foil and laid in the campfire coals till it all melts

Campfire Stories and Songs

Have one or two songs to suggest for the group to sing together.

1. Encourage the sharing of campfire experiences. Invite grandparents to share a favorite memory of time around a campfire: songs sung, stories shared, snacks enjoyed. Then invite the children and youth to also share their favorite campfire memories, even if tonight is their first.
2. Story Sharing – Tell a round robin story by beginning with “Once upon a time...” and then inviting participants of all ages to add to the story, as you go around the circle or the group. Can be realistic or fantasy, just have fun building a story. Encourage everyone to participate.
Example: Once upon a time...There was a grandfather, grandmother and their grandchildren at camp for the weekend. They were all excited to spend time together hiking and playing, all kinds of things. One day while they were hiking, they saw a _____ (and so on).
3. You may read a favorite storybook aloud, see appendix for suggestions.

Evening Closing (20-30 minutes)

I Remember

Supplies: index cards or papers or preprinted postcards (see Appendix C), markers

Say: We have just begun to make memories here at camp. I wonder what story you can think of that your grandparent or grandchild might not already know that is part of your story?

“I remember when I was camping and”

“I remember when I was on vacation and....”

“I remember a campfire one time....”

1. Invite grandparents to share a story about themselves that their grandchildren haven't heard in their family group.
2. Also in their family group, trade and invite the grandchildren to share a story about themselves that their grandparent may not have heard before.
3. Pass out the index cards or papers and invite each family group to make up a title for each of their shared stories. Write the title on one side of the card and draw a picture that reminds them of that story on the other side. (These cards can also be postcard size and collected. Leader might send them to the campers as a reminder of the memories they shared at camp.)
4. Invite each family group to share their titles and pictures with the whole group.

Blessing and Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite your group to be still and listen for a moment as we close our time today with a blessing and prayer. You can invite them to sit quietly as they take in the nighttime sky instead of closing their eyes and folding their hands. The leader can read the prayer or invite everyone to echo each line repeating after you.

*For nights with stars,
For paths to follow
For hills to climb and the journey before us.
For the people we gather with this night,
For the memories we have shared,
And for the memories we will make.
For all these wonderfully glorious things
We thank you God. Amen*

DAY 2

Bible Story Memories - Part 1 (20-30 minutes)

Sharing Bible Story Memories is designed to be a place of sharing the Bible story alongside interactive storytelling that engages all ages and stages with wondering and pondering questions. The intention is to engage and explore God's word and connect scripture to the activities and experiences of the retreat.

Supplies:

- sand/dirt on a cookie sheet, box, or outside setting where you can tell the story on the ground
- a blue felt "river" for the Jordan river (12 inches long then cut in half)
- a small jewelry size box for the "ark," with toothpicks added on the sides for the poles
- two pieces of wood to represent the priests
- other small pieces of wood to represent the people
- 12, 1" rocks
- Bible Study Memories script part 1 from Appendix C, printed in advance
- a video is available to watch in advance to demonstrate how you might share this story (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R_caUSLVfEuxJpBWX0LJAUv4r4dDfbnj/view)

Invite everyone to gather around for the story. A half circle is best with the storyteller sitting with the sandbox in front where everyone can see. Share the story slowly with pauses and moving the objects slowly at different places of the story.

Find the "Bible Story Memories – Part 1" Script in the Appendix C, and present it.

I Wonder Questions:

Ask these questions of the group and invite them to ponder for a moment then answer. If you have a large group, you might want to move to small groups and let them answer the I Wonder Questions in those smaller groups.

- I wonder what it felt like to be on the riverbank and see the rushing river in front of you?
- I wonder how the people felt when they saw the dry ground where the river had flowed?
- I wonder what those stones looked like?
- I wonder how many stories about the stones the people of God told?

To close this part of Bible Story Memory, invite the children and youth to say:

“What do these stones mean?”

Then invite the adults to respond with:

“To be memorials to remind you of the hand of God to keep you safe.”

Say: God loves us all and wants to always take care of us and keep us safe. God also gives us memories so that we can remember God’s love and tell those stories again and again.

Bible Story Memory Activity - Thumbprint Heart Glass Magnets (15-20 minutes)

Supplies:

- cardstock – (bright white heavyweight paper works best) – 1 per person
- assorted color ink pads – 1 per family group or share
- extra-large clear glass gems (without any iridescent coating or finish) – 1 per person
- scissors
- Mod Podge (or another clear drying glue)
- paintbrush – 1 per family group
- strong round craft magnets – 1 per person
- hand wipes for inked thumbs



Say: Each of us is made special by God and each of us is unique and like no other person. Our thumbprints prove that God made us each individually. Did you know that our thumbprint is uniquely ours and no one else in the world has that same fingerprint? Our activity will remind us of how special God made each of us and how much God loves us all.

1. Make thumbprints to form a heart by pressing your thumb into an ink pad, then gently press the thumb with ink onto bright white cardstock. Then, press your thumb into the ink pad to reapply the ink. Tilt your thumb slightly and press it onto the paper to complete the heart shape. Repeat the above steps to make more fingerprint hearts, keeping at least three-four inches of space between each thumbprint heart. Invite kids and grandparents to each make a thumbprint heart so that kids have a magnet with their grandparent’s thumbprint to take home and grandparents have a magnet with their grandchild’s thumbprint to take home. Allow fingerprint ink to dry before moving on to step 2.
2. Place a drop of clear-drying glue on the glass gem’s back (flat side). A little bit goes a long way—don’t use too much glue, or it can smear the thumbprint heart and cause it to blur.

Next, put the glass gem on the paper with the thumbprint hearts—glue side down—to attach it to the thumbprint. Press down on the glass gem to distribute the glue evenly underneath it and remove any air bubbles. Allow the glue to dry overnight if possible.

3. Use small scissors to trim and cut away any paper that remains around the glass gem (it does not need to look perfect). If the paper lifts away from the glass gem while cutting it, glue it down again in the next step.
4. Use a foam brush to paint clear modge podge on the back of the heart art (the back of the glass gem). Go over the edges of the paper to ensure they are glued down. Place glass gem glue side down onto a magnet and allow the thumbprint heart magnets to dry overnight.
5. Once they are dry, they may be added to the Memory Boxes made today as well.

Nature Hike/ Hunt (set your own time depending upon length of hike)

Supplies:

- paper lunch bag – 1 per group
- pencils – 1 per group
- Nature Hunt Cards found in Appendix C, printed in advance

Find an area around camp where you can take a short nature hike for a nature hunt where everyone can look for the items listed on the cards (see card template in Appendix C). Plan to take photos of family groups (grandparents with each grandchild) along the way so that all participants will have a photo to place in their frames to take home and remember this day. Invite every family group to take a Nature Hunt card and a small lunch bag (if you are collecting items) on the walk. If you are not collecting items, check them off and write in what you found for the various categories. Encourage family groups to work together.

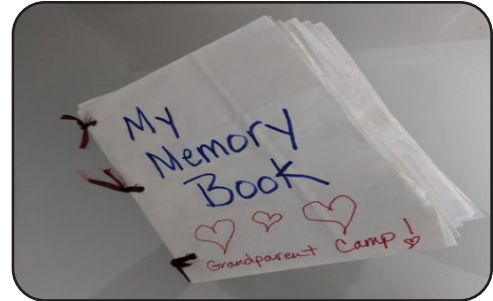
Note: If later they do not keep the items collected, invite them to try and return the items to the natural area, giving them back to God's creation.

Paper Bag Memory Book (20-30 minutes)

The fun thing about making a paper bag book is the resulting “envelope” pages. Because the book is constructed from paper bags each page has an inner envelope. This is the perfect spot for stashing special treasures and memories.

Supplies:

- 4 paper lunch bags – per person
- paper punch
- 12” long ribbon or yarn – per person
- scissors
- markers, crayons



1. Unfold the bottom flap of each bag, and cut off the top of the “T” (see photo – cut on the dashed line)
2. Stack all four bags on top of one another and fold them in half, so they form a book.

3. Working with just one folded paper bag at a time punch a set of holes near the fold, through both layers of the bag. Punch at least two holes. Place the bag that’s already had holes punched on top of another bag and mark where holes should be punched. Remove the first bag, punch holes on the spots marked, and repeat with the third and fourth bag. This way the holes will line up.



4. Use the ribbon or yarn to weave through a set of holes, tie in a knot, and trim the ribbon. Weave the remaining ribbon or yarn through the next set of holes and tie it off, trim. Do the same for all your holes. It works well to open the book and feed the ribbon/yarn through the holes, and then tie it with a knot on the outside of the book.
5. Decorate the front of the Memory Book and start writing in memories as well as collecting mementos in your book pockets.

Activity Options

Find a couple optional craft projects to insert into your time from Appendix A or share in camp activities that are available at your site.

Memory Box (15-20 minutes)

This activity is based on the Ark of the Covenant- the box the priests carried which held reminders of God's care and faithfulness for the people of God. Create a memory box that will hold your treasures and memories as reminders to tell your story. If there are multiple children/youth in a family group, encourage at least one box for grandparents and one for grandkids within the same household if not individual boxes.

Supplies:

- 6" x 6" x 6" cardboard box with lid – 1 per person
 - contact paper or wrapping paper, to cover box
 - stickers, gems, foam shapes (decorations for outside)
 - markers
1. Cover the box if needed, using contact paper or wrapping paper. Write your name on the box.
 2. Add decorations to create a treasure box for memories by adding stickers etc. to decorate the box.
 3. Start collecting memories – adding in anything you have collected previously like your card from the first night's closing, nature hunt card, glass thumbprint magnet, and/or paper bag memory book.

Evening Session 2:

Evening Activity Options (1 hour)

1. **Board Game Night** - Bring a variety of popular boardgames and spread them out in a room. You can invite folks to pick a table and start playing a game or you can rotate table to table every 10 minutes. Players leave their table with the game in place and sit at the next game table and start playing that game before switching again. Consider games from past generations like Candyland, Checkers, Mousetrap, Apples to Apples, Yahtzee, etc.
2. **Movie Night** - Show a movie appropriate for all ages that crosses the generations. Add popcorn and treats. Suggestions: *UP*, *Cars*, *Toy Story*, or *Curious George*, or Dr. Seuss movies. Check with your camp and conference center or congregation for a license for showing the movies. Many organizations already have the necessary license needed.
3. **Carnival Night** - Create several carnival-like games such as ring toss, ball throw, bean bag toss, throw the ball into the cups, etc. Check with your retreat center or camp to see what might be available. Pinterest.com will show a variety of easy to make games – soda bottles & swim rings, cardboard box with

a hole cut for ball throw, piece of cardboard with various holes cut for bean bags, large plastic cups with small balls or rocks to toss into.

4. **Giant Games Night** - Check to see if your retreat center or camp has giant games available such as Jenga, Tic-tac-toe, Kerplunk, Checkers, Connect Four, etc. You may also choose to make a few giant games ahead of time. A Pinterest.com search will show how to make several Giant Games. Various stores also carry many for a reasonable cost.

Campfire

Your campfire could include various songs, stories, and campfire treats.

Campfire Experiences - Around the campfire share favorite songs, stories and family times from past campfire experiences. You could start this time by asking these questions:

1. What's your favorite campfire snack?
2. What's the "best" way to toast a marshmallow?
3. What's your favorite campfire song?
4. What's your favorite campfire story?

Follow up by singing some of these songs and/or telling some of these stories.

If your group hasn't had much experience around the campfire you could bring a storybook to read aloud. See suggestions in Appendix B.

After 30-45 minutes of stories and songs, enjoy some campfire treats – s'mores, banana boats, campfire cones. See p. 11 for options and supplies needed.

Evening Closing 2 (10–15 minutes)

Supplies:

- postcards from see Appendix C, printed in advance
- pens

Sharing memories from the day:

Say: Now that we have been together a little longer, I wonder what memories you have created today?

Go around the group inviting grandparents and grandkids to share their answers to these questions:

- What was the most fun today?
- What was the most challenging today?

- What would you like to do again sometime with your grandparent/grandchild?

You might also hand out printed postcard templates either 6”x4” or 8½”x5½” (see Appendix C) and invite grandparents and grandkids each to write down their memories of the day. Collect the cards and address them, add stamps and mail later to the kids and grandparents to remind them of the memories they created at camp.

Blessing & Prayer 2 (5 minutes)

The leader can lead the prayer or invite everyone to echo the lines repeating after you.

*Creator God,
Thank you for this time together. We are grateful for the chance
to make new memories and to reflect on your amazing love.
Help us to remember that You are always with us and guiding us,
In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.*

Day 3

Picture Frames (15-20 minutes)

Supplies:

- 4 popsicle sticks or tongue depressors– per person.
- fast drying glue or hot glue gun
- small gems or craft foam shapes to decorate frame
- magnets for the back
- markers
- scissors

Create easy picture frames by having each grandparent and each child glue their four sticks together to create a square frame. Then use the supplies to decorate one side of the frame. Carefully glue the pictures taken on the nature hike/hunt, along the edges of the frame. Then add magnets to the back of the top two corners.

Bible Story Memories – Part 2 (20-30 minutes)

Building memories begins with marking time and sharing stories. The Bible is a book of memories built by the people of God making their way through life. Remember Joshua? With God’s help, Joshua led the family of God to the

Promised Land continuing the journey that Moses had started years ago. As everyone crossed over the Jordan River into a new land, they built reminders by laying down stones. Those stones reminded them to share the story across the generations to their children and grandchildren so that they would always remember how God led the way and took care of them.

Supplies:

- a copy of the script from Appendix C, printed out in advance
- a large, long piece of blue fabric to represent the Jordan river
- twelve ~10” stones made from lunch bags filled with newspaper and shaped into rocks
- a ~2’ x 2’ x 3’ box to be the Ark of the Covenant (or you can pretend to carry a box)
- markers or chalk

Using the script on page 47 of Appendix C, act out the story as a group.

Afterwards, as you close this part of the story remind everyone that the twelve stones Joshua and the people stacked in the Promised Land were a reminder, a memorial to all the ways that God had loved them, taken care of them, and led them for over forty years. We build up memories over the many years together too. We build memories of time together, of great things that we do with God’s help, of great things God does in our lives, and of the amazing love God shares with us and others. What do these stones mean? That God loves us and cares for us, throughout our lives!

Bible Story Memories Activity – Memory Stones (10-15 minutes)

Supplies: stones big enough to hold in your hand and write on, permanent markers

Give each person a stone and a permanent marker. Invite them to think of a word or picture that best describes how they would describe their experience at the retreat. Perhaps it is a favorite activity done together, maybe it is a word that describes a feeling of being together or in this place.

Say: When someone asks you, “What does this stone mean?” What will your answer be? Write or draw that on your stone.

Invite everyone to share their stones by asking together, “What does this stone mean?” followed by each stone creator, sharing their words or picture.

Closing Session (10-15 minutes)

Supplies:

- memory boxes (and optional lanterns)
- hand shaped die cut - 1 per person
- markers or pens

Say: We have shared a lot of memories in our time together.

- I wonder what has been your most favorite memory?
- I wonder what has been your funniest memory?
- I wonder what memory would you like to share again sometime?

1. Invite everyone to take their hand shape and write or draw their favorite memory from the retreat on the thumb.
2. Then on each finger write or draw another memory that you would like to take home and remember.
3. Turn your hand over and on the other side write or draw a memory you would like to share with someone else, like a grandparent or grandchild.
4. Take a few minutes to share what has been written or drawn on the paper hand within family groups.
5. Add your paper hand to your memory boxes along with all the other treasures and memories you have collected.

Blessing and Sending (5-10 minutes)

Invite everyone to place their lanterns in front of them, hold their stones in their hands, and share a blessing as everyone is sent out.

Amazing God, who leads us and cares for us always.

Guide us in the days ahead.

Let your light show us how to love just like you love us.

Care for us like a parent cares for a child, loving us always.

Be with us always no matter what, helping us be strong like a stone.

And when we ask, 'What does this stone mean?'

Help us remember Your stories and how we are a part of them..

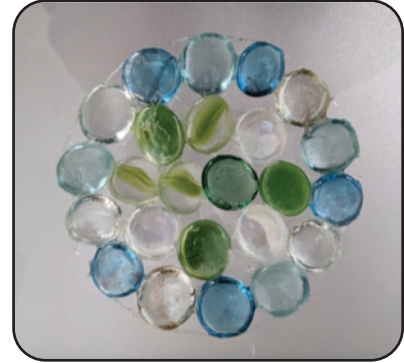
We love you God, Amen.

APPENDIX A – Optional Activities

Optional Crafts

Sun catcher (20-30 minutes)

Invite grandchildren to make a sun catcher for the grandparent and grandparents to make one for the grandchild. At home, hanging in a sunny window they will remember their time at camp and think of the memories they shared.



Supplies:

- clear Elmer's glue (plain Elmer's dries cloudy and yellows in the sun)
 - glass gems (marble-like with a flat side)
 - optional glass beads (flat) – butterflies, hearts, for the center
 - plastic container lids
 - ribbon, yarn, or fishing line
1. Lay the container lid on the table upside down, so it makes a little tray. Add a little clear glue to the bottom of the lid. Don't fill it, just a light covering over the lid bottom.
 2. Place a single layer the glass gems in the glue, flat-side-down, until the lid is full. Optional: you can add glass beads in the center. The glass gems on the outside need to touch each other to form the outer edge of the sun catcher.
 3. Add more glue on top of the gems and around them so they'll be nice and secure, but don't add too much, you don't want the lid to overflow. Fill in any spaces in the center as well.
 4. Set the sun catchers aside somewhere to dry. These need to really be dry before the next step. You can set them outside or in the sun after it has dried a bit so bugs or leaves won't stick to them.
 5. After it is completely dry, peel the lid mold off your sun catcher.
 6. Thread the ribbon, yarn or fishing line through a space on the outer edge to hang. Hang in a sunny window and watch the reflections. Let the reflections be a reminder of the memories shared at camp.

Camp Lanterns (20-30 minutes)

Invite each family group to make at least one for the grandkids and another for the grandparents. These lanterns will help us remember that God's light always guides us and leads us, just like it did for the people with Moses and Joshua.

Supplies:

- 8 oz. glass mason jar – 1 per person
 - clear glue or modge podge
 - paint brushes
 - stickers or words cut out – nouns or adjectives that describe individuals (i.e. funny, happy, fun, smiles, grandpa, grandma, grandchild)
 - votive candle (suggest battery operated) – 1 per person
 - 1' bendable wire for handle – 1 per person
 - wire cutters
1. Cut the 1' length of wire in half. Wrap 1 piece of wire around the rim of the jar and twist lightly. Add a wire handle by connecting the two ends to opposite sides of the rim. Tuck each end under the wire around the rim and twist to secure. Then tighten the wire around the rim tightly.
 2. Add stickers or glue the words on to the outside of the jar that describe the grandparents or grandchildren. Spread them out so there is glass showing in between the words. Invite grandkids to make one with words that describe their grandparent and grandparents for the grandchild.
 3. Cover the stickers and words with clear glue to give them a protective coating. Let dry.
 4. Add the votive candle and your lantern is complete. Give the lantern to the person you made it for and share the words you chose to describe them.
 5. Bring the lanterns you received to the closing later in the day.

Prayer Rocks

Supplies: small stones, paint markers, acrylic paint, small tip paint brushes

Paint messages of promise and hope on stones to remind others of God's promise to always be with us and provide for us. Paint one rock to take home and another to leave at camp for others to see and be reminded of God's love.

Optional Activities

Building Rock/Object Cairns

Outside or even along a trail, collect rocks, sticks, pinecones or other objects and stack them to create cairns as you talk about how we use cairns to mark the way. You may want to take photos that can be added to Memory Box or collect a rock that was one of those used to build the cairn.

Think about or talk about:

- What rocks work best to stack? Why?
- How tall can you build a cairn?
- Why is the foundation or first stone important?

Games

If you live in an area with rocks and stones, these games are designed for all ages & stages to play together – just having fun with rocks.

1. Rock toss, skipping rocks in the water
2. Giant Tic Tac Toe with stone markers
3. Hopscotch with walking options and stone markers
4. Build rock towers to see how many rocks can be stacked before they fall

Graces/Prayers for Meals

The leader may lead these for the group, invite others to share or use them as echo prayers where the group repeats short sections of each line. Feel free to adapt them to fit your group.

Morning Grace/Prayer:

Dear God,

As we begin this new day, go with us as we build new memories together.

Thank you for the food before us and for all the hands that have prepared it. May it give us energy and nurture us mind, body and soul.

Guide us as people of God who are willing to learn, discover and explore all you have planned for us this beautiful day in your creation.

Amen.

Noontime Grace/Prayer:

Dear God,

We give thanks for the day that we are encountering and all the memories we have made. Nurture us with this meal and give us all that we need for the rest of this day. We thank all of the people that have been a part of our meal from farm to table. Bless them and all of us as we gather to share this meal.

Amen.

Evening Grace/Prayer:

Dear God,

You are the Creator of all things, and we give you thanks for all the gifts we have received. Bless this meal and all the hands that have helped prepare it. We give thanks for a great day filled with your amazing story, people and love. May we continue to build memories and remember our blessings.

Amen.

Mission Experience Options

Greeting Cards

Invite your grandparents and grandchildren to work together to create colorful greeting cards to be distributed to older adults living alone or in care centers, to brighten their day and leave a memory of love and graciousness.

Supplies:

- 5" x 8.5" white cardstock, cut in half and then folded
- markers
- stickers or other decorations
- invitation size envelopes

Decorate the cards and share words of greeting and love. Place cards inside the envelopes. When complete you could: 1) encourage your participants to deliver them to an older adult living alone or in a care center, or 2) check with your ministry leaders to see if your congregation has a relationship with a center or older adults within the congregation, who could use an encouraging message.

Stockings for Seniors (or similar distribution ministry to older adults)

Check with your congregation or ministries in your area for projects that reach out to older adults - several do special items like Christmas stockings for the holidays.

In advance, encourage your group and/or congregation to collect and bring items for this project. While together, sort the items among the bags or stockings. Encourage your group to be a part of the distribution of the stockings to the agency or directly to the older adults if that is possible. Talk about what a lovely memory is created when someone receives an unexpected gift like this and feels cared for.

Supplies:

- Christmas stockings or decorated bags
- hard candies
- puzzle books
- chapstick
- lotion
- hand sanitizer
- fun items
- stationary for writing notes or letters
- snacks
- ornament

APPENDIX B – Music & Storybook Suggestions

Music Suggestions

Pick classics that both generations might know:

This Little Light of Mine
God’s Got the Whole World in His Hands
Kum Ba Yah
Jesus Loves Me
She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain
Oh My Darling
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Sanctuary
Father, I Adore Thee
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High

Storybook Suggestions

“Granddad’s Prayers of the Earth” by Douglas Wood
“Wild About You!” by Judy Sierra
“Wherever You Are: My Love Will Find You” by Nancy Tillman
“I’d Know You Anywhere, My Love” by Nancy Tillman
“What Does Love Look Like?” by Janette Oke
“We Are Love” by Jennifer Black
“No Matter What” by Debi Gliori
“In My Momma’s Kitchen” by Jerdine Nolen
“How Big is Love?” by Amy Parker
“God Gave Us Love” by Lisa Tawn Bergren
“Wherever You Go” by Pat Zietlow Miller
“Grandy’s Quilt” by Renee Wall Rongen
“Old Bear” by Jane Hissey
“Child of Mine, Know This” by Rebecca Gittrich Whitecotton

APPENDIX C – Supplemental Materials

Evening Activity – Stargazing

Free apps for Stargazing:

- Star Walk 2 - <https://starwalk.space/en>
- SkyView Lite – www.appose.com
- Star Map Tracker - <https://www.appconner.com/app-star-tracker>
- Star Tracker
- Solar Walk 2
- Starlight
- Star Finder
- NASA
- Star Chart
- Constellation Map

Bible Story Memories Script Part 1

This is the story of God’s family with Joshua as their leader at a time after they had traveled for a lot of years, 40 in fact, wandering in the desert where God took care of them. God provided water when they were thirsty, food when they were hungry and guided them on their journey both day and night.

Point out the sand/dirt desert.

God also gave them rules to live by. Those rules were so important that God wrote them down on stone tablets and gave them to a man named Moses. When God gave them the rules or the “Ten Best Ways to Live”, they loved them so much that they wanted to keep them close by.

Add the ark (box) to the desert.

God told the people to build a box called an ark and cover it with gold. It had poles on the sides, so the people could always carry it with them wherever they went.

The priests, the special men who taught about God’s promises, were the ones who carried the ark from place to place. The box carried inside memories or symbols that reminded God’s family of God’s rules, God’s blessings and how God had taken care of them and given them bread on their journey. Things that were special and reminded them of their story together and with God.

Add two priests (pieces of wood) next to the box in the desert.

Pick up the ark and move it as if it is traveling along with the priests.

One day, the people were told that this was the day they were going to cross the Jordan River to the land God had promised. It was spring and the river had lots of water.

Add the blue river pieces together overlapping in the center of the desert.

Add some people (pieces of wood)

The priests were carrying the ark ahead of everyone and as soon as their feet touched the water, the water ahead stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap, so the people could cross over to the Promised Land.

Move the priests & ark to the edge of the river.

Pile one side of the river up showing dry ground in between.

The priests carrying the ark led the way and stood in the center while the people crossed, walking on dry ground. When the whole nation, hundreds, and hundreds of people, moms and dads, children, and youth, grandparents and great grandparents had crossed, God sent a message to Joshua.

Move the priests to the center and move the “people” across to the other side.

God told Joshua to pick twelve men from the people. After that, the twelve men were to pick up twelve stones from the middle of the river near the ark.

Place the 12 stones near the ark & priests in the middle of the river.

The men took those twelve stones from where the priests had crossed over the river and placed them where they would camp that night on the other side of the river. Joshua told the men that these twelve stones would, “Serve as a sign among you.” These stones would be reminders to them, their children, and all the people of God.

Move the twelve stones to a place on the other side.

“In the future when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan River was cut off when the ark was carried to the riverbank. To help you remember. These stones are to be a memorial to the people forever to help them remember.”

Once everyone had crossed over safely, the waters of the Jordan River flowed just like they had before.

Move everyone across & move the blue felt back to make the river flow again.

Whenever children ask their grandparents or parents “What do these stones mean?” they are told the story of when God’s people crossed the Jordan River on dry ground into the Promised Land. God did it so that all the people might know that the hand of God is powerful, and God will always take care of them, forever.

Put your arms & hands out as if to say, “Why?”

Lay out your hand near the stones & the people with your palm facing up.

That is God's Story of Building Memories for Each of Us

I Wonder Questions:

Ask these questions of the group and invite them to ponder for a moment then answer. If you have a large group you might want to move to small groups and let them answer the I Wonder Questions in those smaller groups.

1. I wonder what it felt like to be on the riverbank and see the rushing river in front of you?
2. I wonder how the people felt when they saw the dry ground where the river had flowed?
3. I wonder what those stones looked like?
4. I wonder how many stories about the stones the people of God told?

To close this part of Bible Story Memory, invite the children and youth to say:
“What do these stones mean?”

Then invite the adults to respond with:

“To be memorials to remind you of the hand of God to keep you safe.”

Say: God loves us all and wants to always take care of us and keep us safe. God also gives us memories so that we can remember God's love and tell those stories again and again.

Table Tent Template

Print various questions on both sides of table tent.

One tent per table. Print on an 8 ½" x 11" piece of cardstock paper.

Fold line

**Sample
Question?**

Fold line

**Sample
Question?**

Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Fold line

**What is your favorite
game or sport?**

Fold line

**What is your favorite
game or sport?**

Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Fold line

**What is your favorite
hobby?**

Fold line

**What is your favorite
hobby?**

Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Fold line

**What is your favorite
place to visit?**

Fold line

**What is your favorite
place to visit?**

Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Fold line

**What is your favorite
activity to do with
others?**

Fold line

**What is your favorite
activity to do with
others?**

Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Fold line

**What is your favorite
outdoor activity?**

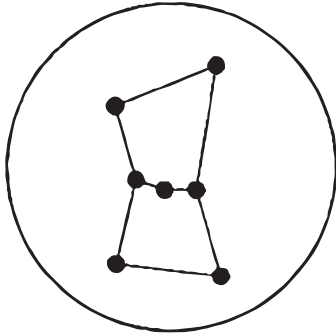
Fold line

**What is your favorite
outdoor activity?**

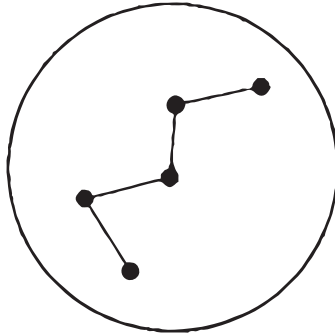
Fold line & tape to opposite end and secure

Create Your Own Constellations

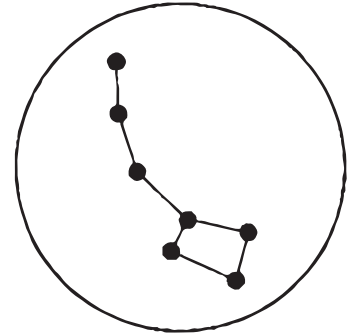
Orion



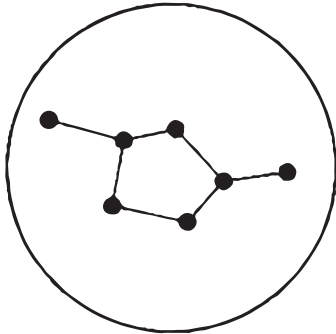
Cassiopeia



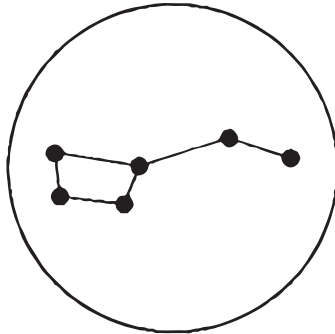
Little Dipper



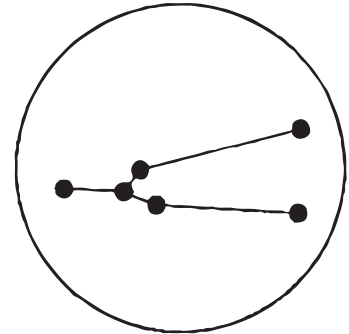
Pisces



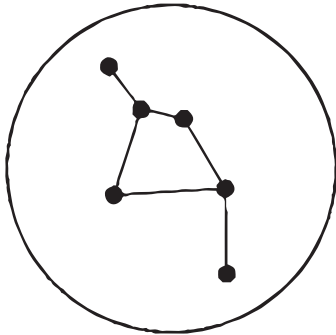
Big Dipper



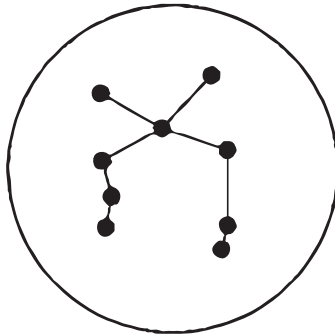
Taurus



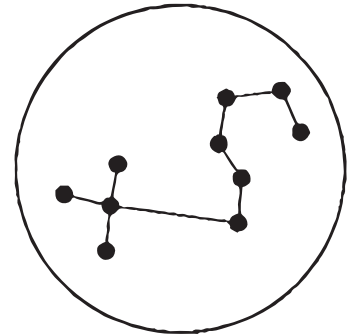
Perseus



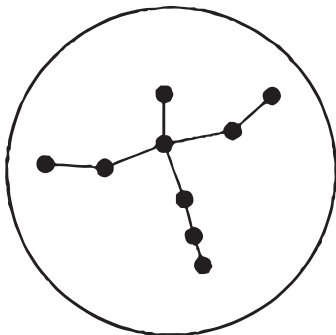
Libra



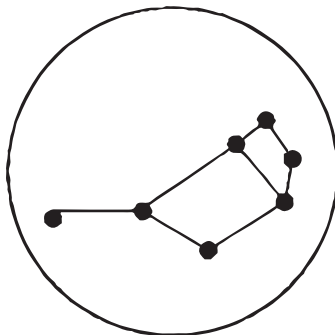
Leo



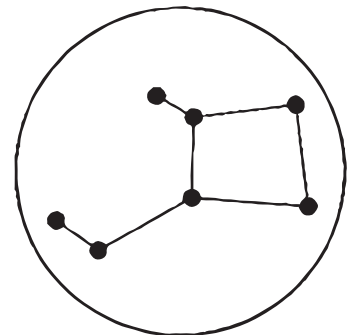
Cygnus



Pleiades



Pegasus



Nature Hike/ Hunt

In advance, print cards on cardstock – 1 per group; you can also glue to a paper lunch bag if collecting items

Nature Hunt

Can you find all of these items?

- 2 kinds of seeds
- 2 pieces of man-made litter
- something straight
- something smooth
- something round
- something rough
- 2 types of leaves
- something you think is beautiful
- something green
- something you think is a treasure

Nature Hunt

Can you find all of these items?

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- 2 pieces of man-made litter
- something straight
- something smooth
- something round
- something rough
- 2 types of leaves
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- something straight
- something smooth
- something round
- something rough
- 2 types of leaves
- something you think is beautiful
- something green
- something you think is a treasure

Evening Activity

Postcard templates - choose between either 6" x 4" or 8 ½" x 5 ½"

Print templates out on cardstock and cut to size ahead of time.

Note: 6" x 4" postcards require postcard stamps, 8 ½" x 5 ½" cards require full postage like a letter envelope.

	From:	Stamp
	To:	

	From:	Stamp
	To:	

From:

Stamp

To:

From:

Stamp

To:

Bible Story Memories Script – Part 2

Supplies (per group acting out the story; if you have small groups, provide for each group):

- a large piece of blue fabric to represent the Jordan river
- twelve stones – made from brown paper lunch bags filled with newspaper and shaped into rocks
- a large box to be the ark of the covenant (or you can pretend to carry a box)
- markers or chalk
- script below, printed out in advance

Script:

I wonder if anyone remembers what Joshua said to the family of God when they were all in the Promised Land after crossing the Jordan River?

“In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan river was cut off before the ark of God. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

Now we have another part of the story to share from Joshua 4: 10-24. The rest of the story. This time you all are going to help tell the story by acting it out.

Note: Depending on the size of your group you may need to split into smaller groups to act the story out. You will need: a crowd to walk, priests to carry the ark, and Joshua holding the stones.

As I tell the story you are invited to act out the parts using the props we have provided – fabric river, 12 stones, box ark. *(Pause to allow the scenes to be put into place - stones in Joshua’s hands, ark in the arms of the priests, river fabric rolled up on the side.)*

The family of God hurried across the dry riverbed of the Jordan River, parents and children, grandparents and great grandparents, all of the people.

Then while the people watched, Joshua commanded the priests with the ark of God filled with the treasured memories to come up out of the Jordan River.

“Come up out of the Jordan.” Joshua commanded.

And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of God. *(Priests carry ark across.)*

No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground then the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before. (*Pull the fabric “river” back down.*)

On the tenth day of the first month the family of God went up from the Jordan and camped on the eastern border of Jericho.

There Joshua set up the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan River. (*Pile the stones.*)

Joshua said to the people, “In the future when your children ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’

Tell them, God’s family crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. God did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful.” (Joshua 4:20-24)

Joshua and the family of God celebrated being in the Promised Land and the twelve stones were a memorial so that they would always remember how God had taken care of them and brought them to the Promised Land. The new beginning!

Share a round of applause for all the actors and invite them to sit and ponder this Bible Story of Memories for a moment.

I Wonder Questions:

These are designed to help the listeners imagine what it was like to be a part of the story. After each one allow time for them to respond.

- I wonder what it felt like to cross the river on dry ground with a wall of water on one side?
- I wonder what it felt like to watch the river rush back after everyone had crossed over safely?
- I wonder where you see God in this story?
- I wonder where you see God in your story?

Wrap up this second part of the story by asking, “What do these stones mean?” Invite family groups to pick a word or two that represent what the stones mean. Using chalk on the real stones or markers on the paper bag stones, write the words on the rocks. Stack them into piles like an altar in your space.

As you close this part of the story remind everyone that the twelve stones Joshua and the people built up in the Promised Land were a reminder, a memorial to all the ways that God had loved them, taken care of them, and led them for over forty years. We build up memories over the many years together too. We build memories of time together, of great things that we do with God's help, of great things God does in our lives, and of the amazing love God shares with us and others.

What do these stones mean? That God loves us and cares for us, no matter what!

About the Author

Sandy Safford resides in Colorado where she lives out her passions for the outdoors and faith formation ministry. She has served as a Commissioned Lay Pastor and Educator, as well as various Children & Youth positions over 30+ years in ministry. For over 15 summers she has served as a volunteer director at Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center, with her favorite camps being Grandparent/Grandchild and Intergenerational Camps. With a degree in environmental education and training in Christian education, writing a Retreat Module has been a joyful opportunity for both passions to blend together.

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