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## 3 The Fall of Jericho

### Scripture

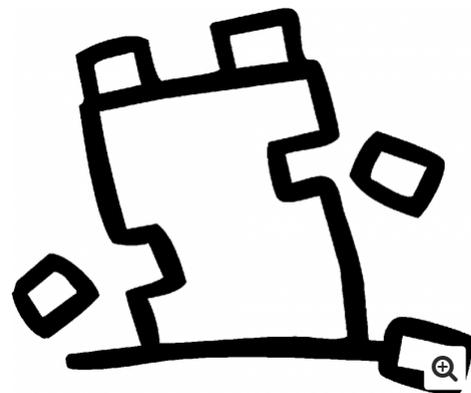
[Joshua 5:13-6](#)

### Focus

God fought for Israel and gave the people victory over Jericho.

### Faith Nurture Goals

- Wonder at the unusual way God gave Israel the victory.
- Tell how God kept the promise made to Rahab—and to Israel.
- Consider what this story shows about God.
- Praise our mighty and powerful God for doing so much for us.



## Leader Reflection

### Preparing to Tell God's Story

Jericho was the gateway to the promised land, going north from the Sinai wilderness. As we learned a few weeks ago, Joshua sent spies to reconnoiter the city, and they had promised to save Rahab and her family for trusting God and helping them.

Now the time had come to overthrow the city. One day as Joshua was walking along he looked up and saw a man blocking his way with a drawn sword. Startled, Joshua asked if he came as a friend or foe. Strangely the man said, "Neither, but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come" (5:14). Joshua, sensing this was no mere man, fell on his face before the angel. Like Moses before him---and as evidence that he now carried the authority of Moses---Joshua was instructed to take off his sandals, for he was standing on holy ground. Then the commander told Joshua that victory over Jericho was assured, and proceeded to give Joshua a battle plan utterly unique in the annals of human warfare.

Instead of a direct attack, the Israelites were to march around the city once each day for six days, and on the seventh day to march around it seven times. Each day the people were to march around Jericho while the priests would blow their shofar horns, but the people on the march were to maintain strict silence until Joshua gave the order to shout with all their might.

So Joshua did as he was told, doing one circuit each day and then returning to camp, except that he also had the priests carry the ark of the covenant in front of the marching throng.

One can imagine the curiosity, perhaps even the ridicule of the residents of Jericho, seemingly safe behind their thick walls. This silent throng marching, the eerie sound of the shofars echoing against the walls. What's going on?

Then, on the seventh day, they marched again. But this time they circled the city seven times. The bewildered citizens of Jericho gawked at the strange sight. Then they all stood silently, the trumpets blasted one more time, and at Joshua's command the people shouted, yelled, screamed at the top of their lungs. And the walls cracked loudly and began to fall apart, tumbling down with a roar and a huge cloud of dust. The Israelites marched into the city unopposed, while the commander of the Lord's army invisibly marched ahead.

Joshua had told the people not to take a thing from the city because it was all devoted to the Lord (they were not to think of it as booty for themselves), but to destroy every living thing in the city--men, women, children, along with the beasts and cattle. When it was all destroyed, they burned the city to the ground.

Undoubtedly, this dramatic victory was calculated to do two things: first, to convince the Israelites that God was with them and would give them the land; and second, to strike fear into the hearts of all the inhabitants of Canaan that an invading army with extraordinary powers was marching into their land. But there was the scarlet rope hanging out the window of one section of the wall that remained. God remembered his promise to Rahab the prostitute, and she was spared along with her family. She was not only spared, but married into the Israelite community and became part of that long line of women and men from whom the Messiah would one day be born.