

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

(Find a picture to print out of Stonehenge in Salisbury, England, and a picture of Cheop's Pyramid in Giza, Egypt. Also, bring 12 stones, medium size to large, to use in the lesson.)

- How many of you have ever seen the legendary stones of the famous site of Stonehenge in Salisbury, England? (...)** *(Share this picture.)*
- The stones are believed to have been placed there over 5,000 years ago and weigh an average of fifteen tons each. They were mined over 200 miles away in Wales, England. No one knows to this day how the stones were brought to this site, but they are a mark of remembering something to those who laid them there.**
- How many have ever seen Cheop's Pyramid in Giza, Egypt? (...)** *(Share this picture.)*
- It is believed to have been built over 4500 years ago for the Pharaoh Khufu of Egypt.**
- Did you know that this gigantic pyramid is made of approximately 2.3 million stones averaging 5 tons a piece? Perfectly laid together and still standing today.**
- This is another human example of stones that their builders used to remember something or someone that has lasted thousands of years.**
- That is what our lesson is on today, stones for our own remembrance in our lives.**

-**To start with, does anyone remember a bible character that was born during the time the Israelites were building pyramids for the great pharaohs of Egypt? Hint: this bible character was born and later placed in a basket in the river to escape death.** (Moses)

-**Can anyone briefly share the story of Moses and how God brought the Israelites out of Egypt?**

(*The Israelites were slaves for over 400 years in Egypt, mistreated and hated by Pharaoh.

*At the end of those 400 years, Moses was born to an Israelite woman and raised by Pharaoh's daughter in the palace.

*When he was 40 years old, he murdered an Egyptian for beating an Israelite and fled from Egypt for his life.

*After 40 years in the land of Midian, God called him back to lead His people out of Egypt.

*After the 10 plagues, Pharaoh let them go.) (Book of Exodus)

-**As they left Egypt, Moses kept telling them that God was going to lead them to the Promise Land, the land of Israel, as we know it today.**

-**Can anyone tell me if they went directly to the Promised Land from Egypt? (No, they spent 40 years in the wilderness.)**

-**Does anyone remember why the Israelites spent 40 years in the desert?**

(They grumbled and complained as God fed them and gave them water to drink. They missed the goods they had in Egypt even though they were slaves. Also, every time Moses left them to spend some time with God, they began to worship idols. They lost their faithfulness.)

-**The main reason is they lost their faith. They would say "God's not coming through like we asked Him to, so who else can we turn to?"**

-Do you think we do this sometimes as well? (...)

-Let's ask ourselves this question: Have we ever felt God was not coming through for us like we needed or in time so we turned to someone or something else to help out?

-What are some "idols" we may turn to when we feel God is abandoning us or not answering us? (Family, friends, money, credit, media, or even psychological idols of complaining, worry or fear, etc.)

-Just like the Israelites, when we don't get an answer when we think we should, we may lose faith in God and forget all the wonders He has done for us in our lives.

-God told the Israelites that because they lost faith in Him, there will be a 40-year detour.

-Have we ever considered that maybe because we are lacking faith and not remembering all His faithfulness to us, that we too may be on a detour? (...)

-If we are on a detour, let's get back on track with Him and turn to Him and remember His faithfulness throughout our lives, trusting He will give His answer in His timing and it will be just what we need.

-To learn how to do this, there is a good story of faithfulness from this group of people that we can learn from. It comes from Joshua, Moses' successor in leading the Israelites.

-To help us with this, let's go over the introduction of Joshua. Does anyone remember the story of Moses sending 10 spies into the land of Canaan to spy it out?

-Who were 2 of the most famous ones? (Joshua and Caleb)

-Does anyone remember what happened when they came back and reported what they found?

(*Out of those ten spies, eight of them came back and were petrified of what they saw.

*They discouraged the Israelites because they saw giants in the land, even though God told them they would conquer and possess the land.

*But, the other two spies, Joshua and Caleb, came back and told them with God's help they could conquer the land and all the people in it.

*The Israelites would not listen to them and ended up letting fear keep them from entering the Land of Promise.

*Everyone over 20 years of age were not allowed to enter the Promise Land because of their faithlessness and for the next 40 years they wandered in the desert until everyone over 20 years old died, except for Joshua and Caleb.)

-Again, faithlessness and not remembering God's faithfulness, keeps us from the Promise Land for a period of time. But, there is hope!

-Here is where we look at Joshua's leadership. When everyone over the age of 20 had passed away during the 40 years of wondering, Joshua inherited a young Israelite nation from Moses. Everyone was 60 years old and younger except for Joshua and Caleb.

-At this time, God called him to lead the Israelite nation over the Jordan River to begin conquering the land of Canaan.

-God told Joshua to have the priests take the Ark of the Lord (which contained the 10 commandments) into the overflowing Jordan River (for it was springtime and the water was at its highest) and cross over into the Land of Promise and begin conquering it.

-As soon as they entered the river, the Lord pulled back the water and they crossed over on dry land, just as they did the Dead Sea. This is twice God pulled back the waters.

-God was again displaying His power and faithfulness to them but it was in His timing.

-God told him to have one man from each of the twelve tribes to stop in the middle of the river and pick up a stone from the dry riverbed to create a monument of remembrance of what the Lord had done for them once they crossed over.

-Let's read our only verse today that is on top of our Verse Sheet to explain what happened: (Joshua 4:19-24 "On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gial on the eastern border of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the *twelve stones* they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, '*In the future when your descendants ask their parents, what do these stones mean? Tell them, Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what He had done to the Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.*'")

-How many stones did God tell them to take out of the river? (12)

-These stones were "Stones of Remembrance" of what the Lord had done for them, God's faithfulness to His children.

*(**Bring your stones out and use them to teach the rest of the lesson.**)*

-We are going to talk about the twelve stones that they used to erect a monument as a remembrance for what God has done for them and relate them to our own lives and what God has done for us. He wants us to remember His faithfulness in the good times and the bad times. No matter what we are going through He wants us to remember His faithfulness. He is still there for us.

-Let's start with stone #1 of our "Stones of Remembrance": (*Hold up first stone.*)

-Let's read aloud what it means on our Verse Sheet, #1. (Someone told us about Jesus, and God softened our hearts and our lives changed.)

-Does anyone remember who that person was that shared how much Jesus loves you?(A specific Sunday School teacher, grandparent, parent, sibling, friend, preacher, acquaintance...)

-We need to remember that he/she was sent by the Lord for your salvation. If you haven't experienced this, do you know that even right now you are with people that the Lord sent to share His love with you, right now, in this very room?

-That's how much He loves you, He keeps putting people in your life to show that. We need to remember His faithfulness in this.

-Let's look at our second "Stone of Remembrance" and read it aloud and together on our Verse Sheet, #2: (You have seen a loved one or a friend change their life and maybe it was because you prayed for them.)

-How many of you have had a friend, a family member, a child, a husband or a wife who you witnessed a change in their life because you prayed for them? (...)

-You may have touched someone's life by planting a seed through prayer, words of encouragement, or by sharing God's love with them that changed their lives forever.

-Even if you haven't seen it, God's Word never comes back void. One day you may see them in Heaven and they may come up to you and say, "Do you remember me?"

-We need to remember God's faithfulness in our prayers for others.

-Let's look at our third "Stone of Remembrance" and read it aloud together on our Verse Sheet, #3: (You or someone you love was healed from an injury or illness.)

-How many of you have had something you were healed from or know of someone who was healed from something? (...)

-So many of us have experienced God's healing, even if it may have only been for a season but there was a healing.

There are three types of healing:

- 1. Where someone is sick and people pray for you and those prayers are answered and it is a miracle.**
- 2. There are times of unseen healing, like when we are exposed to germs from children, or on an airplane, a building, etc. and we never get sick from them. Or almost in an accident and we were protected. These are the things we may never see but God healed us and protected us. *Unseen healing!***
- 3. Then there is *eternal healing*. We may have a friend or family member who had something and they went on to be with the Lord. We are so sad but we know where they are, completely whole in the presence of the Lord. We are going to see them again. That is the best healing of all, eternal healing.**

-Let's continue with our fourth "Stone of Remembrance" and read it aloud together, #4 on our Verse Sheet: (God placed a friend in our life when we needed one the most.)

-How many of you have ever experienced that? When you felt so lost, and so alone and God placed a friend in your life? (...)

-Did you ever experience a phone call or a note coming at just the right time? (...)

-That is a Stone of Remembrance, God providing a friend in a time of need!

-Let's read our fifth "Stone of Remembrance" on our Verse Sheet: (God provided for your physical needs with a home, job, food and clothing.)

-Do you have clothes on today? (...) Do you have food to eat today? (...)

How many of you have been provided for? (...)

-We need to remember God's faithfulness in taking care of our needs.

-Let's read our sixth "Stone of Remembrance" on our Verse Sheet: (God provided you with a family, friends or even a pet that loved you.)

-Who in here has had someone love them during their lifetime? (...)

-God has placed us all in a family, whether it is our relatives or in the Family of God, our spiritual brothers and sisters here on earth.

-We need to remember God provides that for us, and even now, if you are not feeling that, don't listen to your feelings. *God* loves YOU!

-Let's continue with our seventh "Stone of Remembrance", #7: (God did not leave us here on earth without an instruction book. He gave us His Holy inspired Word, the Bible.)

-God gave us an instruction manual. When we don't know what to do, where should we look? (In the Bible)

-Someone broke the letters of the B-I-B-L-E down to represent B-Basic, I-Instructions, B-Before, L-Leaving, E-Earth. BIBLE.

-The Bible teaches us so many things that God wants us to know. All answers are in His Word if we would just search it out. Giving us His Word helps us remember that God loves us!

-Let's read our eighth "Stone of Remembrance" on our Verse Sheet: (God was with us in the midst of a move or change in our lives.)

-How many of you were concerned about moving to a new place? (...)

-Were you anxious about leaving your home, family or friends and all that you were familiar with? (...)

-That fear that you had, was God in the midst of that move? (...)

-God is always with us, faithful in every move we have to make, never leaving us.

-Let's look at our ninth "Stone of Remembrance" on our Verse Sheet: (We have felt God's comfort in grief and hard circumstances.)

-Have you ever felt God's comfort in a time of grief? (...)

-Can anyone share a time you were comforted in a hard circumstance? (...)

-Have you ever been comforted by a child wrapping their arms around you for a hug or a friend who called you in a time of need or even an animal's love? (...)

-God comforts us with those hands and feet of His. He provides these moments to encourage and comfort us. We need to remember them.

-Let's read our tenth "Stone of Remembrance" on our Verse Sheet: (We live in a country where we have freedom to worship.)

-All over the world there are many countries that do not allow freedom to worship the Lord. But God has given us that opportunity right now here in our own country and we need to thank Him for that and remember Him for it.

-Let's read our eleventh "Stone of Remembrance", #11 on our Verse Sheet: (We have felt and experienced God's patience and forgiveness for the many times we have messed up.)

-How many times have you thought a wrong thought or said something that was not kind or considerate? (...)

-How many times have you messed up and God forgave you? (...)

-If you are like me, many! But the beautiful characteristic of God that we need to remember is that anytime we bring it before Him and confess it, He patiently and freely forgives us!

-Let's look at our last Stone of Remembrance #12, the most important one: (We have the assurance that Jesus is coming back again and we will be with Him forever.)

-How many of you know He is coming back again for you? (...)

-How many of you are looking forward to being with Him forever? (...)

-He gives us that promise that one day we are going to see Him again and be with Him forever! We need to remember this beautiful promise!

-Just as the Lord told them to take the stones to remember His faithfulness, God gave us His Word to remember His faithfulness and promises to us.

-Our experiences with Him throughout life remind us of His faithfulness, the many times He faithfully came through for us just like He did for the Israelites.

-We want to remember that no matter what happens today, whether good or bad, that we can go to Him and He is faithful to see us through.

-Our God is a faithful God!

“STONES OF REMEMBRANCE” VERSE SHEET

Joshua 4:19-24 “On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gial on the eastern border of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the *twelve stones* they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, ‘*In the future when your descendants ask their parents, what do these stones mean?* Tell them, Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what He had done to the Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.”

“Stones of Remembrance”

1. “Someone told us about Jesus, and God softened our hearts and our lives changed.”
2. “You have seen a loved one or a friend change their life and maybe it was because you prayed for them.”
3. “You or someone you love was healed from an injury or illness.”
4. “God placed a friend in our life when we needed one the most.”
5. “God provided for your physical needs with a home, job, food and clothing.”
6. “God provided you with a family, friends or maybe even a pet that love you.”
7. “God did not leave us here on earth without an instruction book. He gave us His Holy inspired Word, the Bible.”
8. “God was with us in the midst of a move or change in our lives.”
9. “We have felt God’s comfort in grief and hard circumstances.”
10. “We live in a country where we have freedom to worship.”
11. “We have felt and experienced God’s patience and forgiveness for the many times we have messed up.”
12. “We have the assurance that Jesus is coming back again and we will be with Him forever.”