Lesson

Engaging Introduction

Hello children! Today, we are going to learn about a special chapter from the Bible, Joshua Chapter 16. Imagine being on an exciting adventure, where there's a big map, and you get to pick a spot just for yourself. This is kind of what Joshua and the people of Israel were doing in this chapter. Back in those days, they didn't have things like Google Maps or GPS to tell you where to go or whose land was whose. They were given pieces of land by God Himself, like receiving a special gift.

Before we dive in, let's think about how amazing it would be if your family got a new house, and you got to pick your very own room. You might look for the one with the best view or maybe the one with the sunlight streaming in. We always want to have a special place, don't we? That's what the tribes had to do. They had to settle in the new land that God promised them, a land flowing with milk and honey, which meant it was a very good and fertile place to live.

This chapter may seem just like a listing of boundaries, but it's more than that. It's about God keeping His promises and giving His people a safe place to live and grow. So, get ready to journey back in time and see what we can learn from Joshua Chapter 16 about boundaries, promises, and the special care God has for His people.

Main Teaching Points

1. Understanding the Tribe of Joseph

In Joshua 16, we first hear about the land promised to the tribe of Joseph. Now, Joseph himself wasn't alive during this time, but his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, inherited his land. Joseph was the son of Jacob, also known as Israel, who had many sons; you may have heard of the story of Joseph and his colorful coat. From Joseph's loyalty and faithfulness, God blessed his sons, making them large tribes among all the tribes of Israel.

2. The Land of Ephraim

One of the prominent tribes from the descendants of Joseph was Ephraim. It was decided that they would have a fertile and substantial piece of land. Think of it like this: Imagine you have a big garden to plant whatever you want. The land of Ephraim was very special because it was fruitful. So, their job was to take care of it and make it thrive, just like you would water and tend to your plants in a garden to watch them grow.

It's fascinating to note how their land was a part of God's larger plan for His people. Each tribe received a part that suited them best, illustrating how God cares for us individually.

3. The Importance of Boundaries

Joshua Chapter 16 details specific borders of the territory given to the tribe of Ephraim. While you might think boundaries could be boring, they were quite significant. Boundaries help us know what belongs to us and where we can go. For instance, think about a playground. There are often fences around a playground, not to confine us, but to keep us safe. The boundaries given to the tribe of Ephraim were like guidelines that helped them know where to safely settle and grow stronger.

God set these boundary lines, showcasing His wisdom in giving each tribe what suited their needs best. Just like God had a plan for which tribe lived where, He also has plans for us, and understanding our own boundaries helps us stay safe and happy.

4. Learning to Obey and Trust God

In dividing the land, like we see in Joshua 16, obedience was crucial. The people needed to follow God’s instructions through Joshua to see the full realization of God's promise. This obedience takes trust, just like how you trust your parents when they tell you something is good or bad for you.

Through this distribution, the Israelites were learning the value of listening and trusting God’s direction, showing us how important trust and obedience are for us today. When we read the Bible or listen to stories from it, they guide us much like a map, showing us directions for living a fulfilling life.

Personal Application for Elementary Students

So, what can each of you learn from Joshua 16? Let’s start by remembering that God is faithful to His promises. Just as He promised the land to the Israelites, God keeps His promises to us today. We can trust God in our lives just as the Israelites did. Whether it's promising to be with you at school or helping you when you’re feeling afraid, God is always there.

Just like the boundaries given to Ephraim were set to keep them safe and allow them to thrive, you all have boundaries, too. These could be rules at home or school to protect you and help you grow. Remember, these aren't just limited spaces but guidelines to help you become the best you can be.

Furthermore, when the Israelites received their land, they needed to take care of it. This is important for you, too, as it teaches you to be responsible for what you have. It could be your toys, your home, or your little garden. God gave you these things so that you can learn to care for them as part of learning to be responsible.

And most importantly, remember that when you listen to directions from those who care for you like your parents and teachers, you’re learning to obey and trust – two important lessons that we see the Israelites practicing as they receive and settle into their new lands.

Interactive Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think having a place to call home was important for the Israelites?

- Discuss with the children that having a place called home gives us a sense of belonging and security. It's just like how you feel when you're in your cozy room. Acknowledge how the Israelites must have felt excited and relieved to finally have their own land after many years in the desert.

2. What do the boundaries for the tribe of Ephraim teach us about rules? Are all rules bad?

- Guide the discussion towards understanding the importance of rules and boundaries. Use examples like the rules they have in their classrooms or at home, which are not meant to restrict them but to keep them safe and help them grow properly.

3. What are some ways you can show trust and obedience to God and people who care for you?

- Have the children brainstorm ideas like listening to their parents, doing their homework, and praying. Emphasize how obedience is an act of trust and love, showing that we believe the other person has our best interests in heart.

4. Can you think of a responsibility you have that you’re proud of?

- Encourage children to share responsibilities, such as feeding a pet, watering plants, or helping siblings. Acknowledge each child’s efforts and highlight how this is their version of caring for their 'land' like the Israelites did.

Let's conclude by reminding the children that God took care of the Israelites by giving them land, and He takes care of us as well. Remember to appreciate the promises, boundaries, and responsibilities we have because they are all part of God’s good plan for our lives.