

The Junior Observer

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An Old Testament Story

The Israelites Promise to Follow God

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Catholic Courier

After leading the Israelites in the desert for 40 years, Moses died.

God spoke to Moses' aide, Joshua. "Moses my servant is dead. So now, you and the whole people with you, prepare to cross the Jordan to the land that I will give the Israelites," God told Joshua.

"Only be strong and steadfast, being careful to observe the entire law which Moses my servant enjoined on you. Do not swerve from it either to the right or to the left, that you may succeed wherever you go," God warned.

The land God had promised the Israelites was occupied by their pagan enemies who served false gods. With God's help, the Israelites waged many battles over several years and finally defeated their foes.

God then told Joshua to divide the land among the 12 tribes of Israel.



(Illustration/Linda Jeanne Rivers)

Bible Trivia

Who was Joshua's father?
(Hint: Joshua 1:1)

Answer: Nun.

Many years later, after God had given the Israelites rest from all their enemies, and when Joshua was old and advanced in years, he summoned all Israel, including the elders, leaders, judges and officers.

"You have seen all that the Lord, your God, has done for you against all these nations; for it has been the

Lord, your God, who fought for you," Joshua said.

"Therefore be strong and be careful to observe all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, never turning from it right or left, mingling with these nations that survive among you," Joshua continued. "You must not invoke their gods by name, or swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them, but you must hold fast to the Lord, your God, as you have done up to this day."

Joshua warned the people not to break their covenant with God by serving false gods, because the people would quickly perish from the land God had given them.

"If it does not please you to serve the Lord, decide today whom you will serve," Joshua said. "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

"Far be it from us to forsake the Lord for the service of other gods. ... Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for He is our God," the people replied.

Q&A

Who led the Israelites across the Jordan?

What did God and Joshua want the Israelites to observe?

Read more about it in Joshua 1, 23 & 24

Thousands of Altar Servers Ready to Serve the Church

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—During a hot summer's week, thousands of young altar servers made a pilgrimage to Rome to meet others for prayer, games, music and discussion, and discover more ways to serve the Church.

One afternoon July 31, a temporary pilgrimage center near St. Peter's Square was full of activity. Kids were getting temporary tattoos with the help of a religious sister; standing in front of a greenscreen to superimpose their picture onto a photo of Pope Francis; decorating their pilgrimage T-shirts; relaxing on beanbag chairs and more.

The highlight of the July 29-Aug. 2 pilgrimage was

meeting with Pope Francis in the square July 30. More than 50,000 altar servers from 20 countries and 88 dioceses were joined by another 20,000 guests and young people.

"Altar servers are present everywhere the Church is present," said Tobias Knell, the secretary general of *Coetus Internationalis Ministrantium* (CIM), the international association of altar servers that organizes the pilgrimage every four or five years.

The first pilgrimage was held in 1962 with about 2,000 altar servers going to Rome. Today, tens of thousands attend.

In the pews, it is often



(CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

Pope Francis greets children in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican July 30. About 50,000 altar servers from 20 countries were on a pilgrimage to Rome.

difficult for small children to sit still for Mass, while having an important task and serving at the altar is "a very good way" for children to participate more closely in the liturgy, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, president of CIM, told Catholic News

Service July 29.

"They can develop a closeness to God, a closeness to holiness also, a sense of mystery, of awe, and I think that's very important because our times (are) in need of God and of transcendence again," he said.

He said of the altar servers, "They are so important to the Church. I wish really that all young people feel welcome in the Church and feel that they have a place."

—By Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service.