

From Conquest to Compromise to Conquered

Joshua's passing marks the end of a strong, central, spiritual leader for the children of Israel. There is a period of 350 years between Joshua and the first king, King Saul. During this period the twelve tribes fragment into separate tribal governments. There are now judges who are leaders, sometimes military leaders of different sections of the land. The children of Israel have barely made their declaration to serve and obey the Lord when they plunge into a cyclical pattern of sin. First rebellion - the people get tired of God. Then retribution - they want to leave God so He delivers them to their enemies. Then repentance - Now they are sorry and they want God to save them. And finally, restoration - God forgives them, rescues them, and blesses them. Seven times they fall and seven times God saves them. We see through these cycles God's covenant, unrelenting, pursuing great love for His people. Now let's play a game to model the sin cycles that the children of Israel went through and to learn how we can avoid this pattern in our own lives.

God's Great Love for Us! Hot Potato

Objectives:	Remember and share what God has done for your family. Have fun with your family!
Number of Players:	2 - or more
Length:	30 minutes or more
Set up:	Arrange everyone in a circle (standing inside or outside). Begin in prayer by asking God to be with you, to soften your hearts, to teach you through your play. Read aloud the summary above and begin with the oldest person holding the "hot potato." Each time you pass the hot potato, you should say your lines and pass it as quickly as possible, as if it were a very, very, very hot potato.
Props:	A ball, a potato or something to be used as "hot potato" rope or yarn to bind everyone's hands in round two

Round One, Conquest!: the oldest person will go first by holding the hot potato and telling the group "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Then toss the hot potato to someone else in the circle. That person will say "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" Continue tossing the ball and repeating "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" until everyone has had a turn. End the round with the hot potato in the hand of the youngest.

Round Two, Compromise!: Bind each individual's hands together (in front of them). This round begins with everyone facing out from the circle with their hands tied together signifying the children of Israel turning their back and walking away from the Lord and the bondage they face because of that decision. The youngest person will begin the round by saying "I have forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Asherahs." Accompany this saying with a stomp of the foot and a proud stance. Maneuver into a position where the hot potato can be passed from your bound hands to the next person's bound hands. The next person will say the same thing with the same actions and pass the hot potato to the next person. Keep going around and saying this saying until everyone has had a turn. End the round with the hot potato in the hand of the youngest.



FAMILY STUDY

Round Three, Conquered!: This round begins with everyone facing toward the center of the circle down on their knees. The youngest person will begin the round by saying “I am sorry Lord, I have forsaken you, please forgive, save and restore me.” (you can add emphasis to this round by actually stating something that you are sorry for.) Quickly pass the hot potato to the person on your right and touch your face to the ground in submission to the Lord. The next person will say the same thing with the same actions and pass the hot potato to the next person. Keep going around and saying this saying until everyone has had a turn. End the round with the hot potato in the hand of the oldest.

Round Four, Restoration!: This round begins with everyone standing facing toward the center of the circle with unbound hands and a smile on their face. The oldest person will begin the round by saying “Thank you Lord for ____.” (praise the Lord for a blessing He has provided to you and/or your family.) Put your heart into it, really praise Him. Then quickly toss the hot potato to someone else in the circle. They will then say, “Thank you Lord for ____.” Again, really put your heart into it, praise Him! Continue tossing the hot potato and praising the Lord until everyone has had a turn. Finish up this last round by joining hands and singing and dancing to the Lord. You can sing “Our God is an Awesome God” or some other praise song that your family knows.

Discussion and Prayer: Have each person share one thing they learned from a specific part of this game. Talk about things you can do as a family to keep yourselves from falling into this cyclical pattern of sin as the children of Israel did. Then, have one person open in prayer thanking God for all He has done and continues to do. Then pray for the person on your right, thanking God for them and the work He is doing in their life and the blessings He has given them. Again, going clockwise continue around the circle praying for the person on your right until everyone has been prayed for.