[Joshua] The Stories Stones Tell

"…So that this may be a sign among you.
When your children ask in time to come,
'What do those stones mean to you?'
then you shall tell them …" - Joshua 4:6

Twelve stones are drawn from the river.
The river is a threshold.
It harkens back to the crossing of the Red Sea at their beginning.
The wilderness is behind the People of God.

Twelve are the tribes so numbered in the wilderness.

The stones, lifted from the river, are a reminder of the Commandments
written on stone, and carried in the heart.

Joshua is the new Moses. He is the one who leads the People of God out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

The stones, dripping with river water, are piled on the far side.
They are forward-facing into the land of milk and honey.

The stones are a memorial forever.
They will cause the children to ask: *What do these stones mean?*

And what will the answer be?

An almost-ten-year-old girl read me a storybook.
It's called *I am Not a Number*.*
"I cried," my sensitive reader warned
And read again the story about a girl in a Residential School.

The Book of Joshua is a story of courage and promise,
and it is also a story of war, the taking of land, the conquest of people.
It invites us to remember the stones that weep;
the stones that hold stories of those who lost land,
language, safety, and home.

The twelve stones from the Jordan were meant to spark questions:
"What do these stones mean to you?"
It is still a holy question.

The stories we tell — and the stories we have not told — shape us.
We remember with honesty.

We hold both gratitude and sorrow,
and let compassion shape how we live in this land,
with humility, reverence, and care.

If the "stones" in your place — land, rivers, buildings, sacred sites — could speak, what stories might they tell? What wisdom or responsibility might they ask of you?

Find or imagine a stone and write on it (or journal about it): On one side: something you are grateful for in your faith story. On the other side: something that needs healing, truth-telling, or compassion. Hold both sides gently. Notice what prayer or resolve rises in you.

**Book:* I am Not a Number"
Written by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer
Illustrated by Gillian Newland.