Before you can play The Step Stone Challenge, you will need a board and some playing pieces. (We have designed a printable game board, which is posted on CommonEnglishBible.com/StepStoneBible for easy downloading, but the more adventurous may want to create their own.)

There are several options available, from the very simple to the wildly creative, from traditional board game size to life size. At whatever scale you play the game, the rules will be exactly the same.

All of these ideas are suitable for all ages to take part. If you think up a better idea, go for it!

PICTURE IT

The Step Stone Challenge calls to mind the River Jordan and the longing of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness to reach the Promised Land on its farther banks. Picture that image. Are you picturing it? There’s the river. There’s a bank on either side of the water. You are in the wilderness. Now imagine step stones appear across the river. If you can safely make your way across the step stones, you will reach the Promised Land on the other side. But remember, everyone must go together or not at all! You cannot make this journey on your own. You might need help or need to help someone else. The step stones might be slippery. You might lose your balance and fall into the rushing water or someone else might.

Can you picture it? Great! So how do we turn this image into a board game on which to play The Step Stone Challenge? Here’s how. And anyone can do it.

THE TWO ESSENTIALS

1. A board. It needs only this: a line for the Wilderness side of the river at one end, a second line at the other end of the board to mark the bank of the Promised Land, and in between there needs to be 10 step stones that act as a path across the water. That’s it!

2. Playing pieces. We’ve got ideas for turning everyday objects into playing pieces. If you choose to make your board “life size,” then the players themselves are the playing pieces.

BEFORE YOU START

Think through these factors before you begin creating your game board. Creating the board itself is a great activity for the group!

- your space
- your budget (all of these suggestions are intended to incur little to no cost)
- whether you are playing inside or outside
- the surface you are playing on
- your group’s various physical abilities
Ideas for a table-top version:

- Print out a copy of the game board we’ve designed. (Younger children might like to decorate it with craft materials or add drawn details.)
- You can simply draw the river banks and 10 step stones out on a sheet of paper. You can color it and decorate it if you like. Play with size—you could make the board big enough to cover your table.
- Cover the entire table with paper, taping around the edges. Get your players to draw out the river banks and step stones before playing the game. Be as decorative and colorful as you like. How might you be able to tell the wilderness side where you start from the Promised Land that you hope to reach across the river? Do they look different? Are there fish in the water? Are there extra craft or scrapbooking materials around? Old magazines? Both could be used for decorating the game board.
- Don’t have time to work on a board, or playing with friends at a coffee house? Scribble the board on a napkin. All you need is a line at each end and 10 circles in between the two lines.
- Do you have a long table? Use a roll of builder’s or baker’s paper or the back of a leftover roll of wall paper.
- Put a box of treats on the Promised Land end of the board as an incentive to complete the game successfully.

Ideas for a hall or large room:

- How big you make your step stones is all a matter of scale. How big is your room?
- Tape it! Mark out the banks and 10 step stones with tape. Blue painters’ tape is easily available at many stores, and it is easily removable without damaging your floor. Check your floor before using stronger tapes.
- Mark the banks with rope or string. Be careful not to create a tripping hazard.
- Get creative. Decorate one end of the room like a desert and one end like a lush, fertile land. You can use photos or draw pictures to stick on the wall.
- Simply mark the location of each bank with a chair or row of chairs.
- Cut the step stones out from newspaper.
- Or ditch the scissors and just use a sheet of newspaper for each step stone. Tape the 10 step stones to the floor.
- Cut out your stones with craft paper or builder’s paper. Tape to the floor.
- Small rugs work too. Pick a different color from the floor, if it’s carpeted, so you can see them.
- Also good for a carpeted room: throw cushions or pillows.
- Depending on the floor surface, paint the banks and step stones with washable water-based poster paint (the kind suitable for kids)
Ideas for outside:

- Draw the banks and step stones with chalk in a (traffic free!) parking lot.
- Mark the step stones using stones or shells from a beach.
- Traffic cones and some imagination could stand in for banks and step stones on a grass lawn, in a parking lot, or on a basketball court.
- Get 10 people to each bring a Frisbee. One Frisbee for each stepping stone.
- Whatever you use outside, make sure it can't blow away in the breeze.

THE PLAYING PIECES

Depending on what size you make the board, find four appropriately sized, different objects to act as playing pieces. The playing pieces can be the same kind of object, but you will need to be able to tell them apart. Here are some ideas.

- Buttons
- Cards a different color or with player’s names printed on them
- Small toy figures of people or animals
- Dolls from a doll’s house
- Plush toy animals
- Decorate bottle tops in different colors and glitter glue.
- Different shoes from a dress-up doll
- Various salt and pepper shakers
- Borrow some playing pieces from a board game you already have. Don’t forget to put them back in the right box afterward!

You get the idea. See what you have available and think creatively.

Remember, if you are playing the life-size game, your “board” will be a room or outdoor space with the players physically moving across it from step stone to step stone as they answer the questions. In this version the players themselves are the playing pieces.
OTHER FUN IDEAS AND TIPS

- If you are playing the life-size version, have a table of treats or a picnic or potluck waiting for the players on the Promised Land side.
- If you are outside, end the game with a cook-out in the Promised Land.
- If you are playing outside with a group of teens and if the weather is good enough, use “super soakers” if someone “falls in the water.” It could add a whole new element of fun. Be sure not to get your Bibles and question sheets wet. And remember, The Step Stone Challenge is meant to be encouraging, not humiliating. Don’t force anyone to get wet who doesn’t want to.
- Is it summer? We do not recommend playing The Step Stone Challenge on an actual river or in a swimming pool. But if it is safe, having the option of going for a nearby swim after the game would make for a fun way to end the day.
- Is it winter? Serve hot chocolate in the Promised Land at the end of the game.

HERE’S WHAT WE DID

We recently played The Step Stone Challenge on a long (around six feet) game board we created ourselves with baker’s paper, chalk, pastels, scrapbooking paper, and a lot of imagination. Our playing pieces were tiny jars one of the players collects.