

LESSON 40

Israel Spies Out the Land

NUMBERS 13–14



BIBLE TRUTH

FAITH IS REQUIRED TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

SUPPLIES: Spy Try: children’s picture book

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 40)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

Where Is Jesus?

SUPPLIES: Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

SUPPLIES: Snack food/water

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Page 40

SUPPLIES: markers/crayons

Spying Out the Land

SUPPLIES: six pieces of paper with the following drawings on them: two sheets each with a bunch of grapes as big as plums; four sheets with angry faces (drawing an open mouth with teeth showing and eyebrows furrowed should make a fairly angry face); tape

The Container Parable

SUPPLIES: one container; a set of papers identifying fears, e.g., the dark, being alone, strange noises, wild animals, etc.; a set of papers with verses addressing fear, e.g., Psalm 23; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 56:3; Proverbs 3:24; John 14:1–2, 27; Hebrews 13:6, etc.

In God I Trust

7. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

TOTAL 60–75 MIN

THE LESSON

OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION 5 MIN

In today’s lesson the children will learn about the spies sent into the Promised Land.

Bring a child’s picture book to class. Tell the children that you are going to train them to be good spies. Explain that a spy is someone sent into the enemy camp to look very closely and bring back a report of all they see. To train the class, tell them you are going to give them a picture to look at for 30 seconds. You will then ask them questions about the picture to see if they can remember what they saw. A good spy remembers everything he or she sees.

Hold up the illustration from the picture book so that everyone can see it. Then ask the class a few questions about the picture to test how well they “spied out” the illustration. Your questions should be simple at first such as, “Can you describe what you saw?” Follow-up questions could get harder like, “What are the people in the picture wearing?”

After you play this game a few times, ask: “What makes a good spy?” The goal is to help them to see that a good spy brings back an accurate report of what he or she sees. Then tell the class that there are spies in your Bible story today, and you want them to judge whether they were good spies or bad ones.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read story 40, “Israel Spies Out the Land,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION 5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- How did Israel respond to the spies’ report?
(Their hearts were full of fear at the report of fortified cities and giants in the land.)

- How was the report from Joshua and Caleb different?
(They were full of faith, and they believed that the Lord would help the Israelites occupy the land he had promised to them.)

- How did the Israelites respond to Joshua and Caleb’s appeal?
(They talked about stoning them [Numbers 14:10], and they grumbled against God and Moses [Numbers 14:2–3].)
- What is grumbling?
(Grumbling expresses doubt about God’s faithfulness and care. It comes from an ungrateful and wicked heart.)
- What is the consequence for Israel’s grumbling against God?
(They wandered in the desert for 40 years and eventually died there without entering the Promised Land. But God allowed their children to enter the Promised Land.)

SNACK QUESTIONS 10 MIN

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- Have you ever been afraid?
(Accept any answer.)
- What does fear do to our faith in God?
(When we are afraid, we forget how great our God is, and God seems smaller to us.)
- What did Joshua and Caleb believe that pleased God?
(They remembered God’s faithfulness in leading them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, and they believed God’s promises to bring them into the Promised Land.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5–10 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. 20–30 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 40—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

Where Is Jesus? _____

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: Numbers 14:11–24

Once again Moses stood in the middle for his people and prayed to God saying, "Please forgive the sins of your people, according to your great steadfast love." God granted Moses' prayer because Moses prayed for the one thing that could save Israel: God's steadfast love and forgiveness.

Although God didn't allow Israel into the Promised Land, he forgave Israel because he knew that one day his Son, Jesus, would stand in the middle as their true mediator and die on the cross for their sins. Centuries later, in a letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul called Jesus the one true mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) who stood in the middle between sinful man and a holy God. Even as Moses prayed, God saw ahead to the day when he would send his Son.

- Why did Joshua and Caleb believe Israel could take the land?
(They trusted in the Lord for their strength.)
- What did the other spies say?
(They said the people of the land were big and strong, but the Israelites seemed like grasshoppers.)
- What did the faithless spies forget?
(They forgot how God had already delivered them from the Egyptians and parted the Red Sea.)

Spying Out the Land

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ six pieces of paper with the following drawings on them: two sheets each with a bunch of grapes as big as plums; four sheets with angry faces

(drawing an open mouth with teeth showing and eyebrows furrowed should make a fairly angry face)

- ✓ tape

Before class, tape the drawings to the back wall of the class.

Explain to the class that they are going to pretend to be the spies and you are going to send them to spy out the land. Have the children spread out and crouch down low. Pretend you are Moses giving the order to spy out the land. Then coach them along, pretending that they need to be careful not to be spotted. That is why they are sneaking around.

Tell them to be looking out for the crops and the people of the land. Eventually point out the drawings on the wall. Have them study the drawings, and then return to Moses and give him a report. Talk about whether the angry faces looked scary. Then talk about how because they trusted God Joshua and Caleb were not afraid of the big people in the land. Talk to them about how we can trust God when we are afraid.

The Container Parable

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one container
- ✓ set of papers identifying fears, e.g., the dark, being alone, strange noises, wild animals, etc.
- ✓ set of papers with verses addressing fear, e.g., Psalm 23; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 56:3; Proverbs 3:24; John 14:1–2, 27; Hebrews 13:6, etc.

Instructions prior to class: Fill a container with labeled pieces of paper. Each paper will identify something that makes people afraid (see supply list above).

Have each child remove one piece of paper from the container. Read the word or phrase on it, and then have the child crumple up the paper and throw it in the trash. Talk together about why this item makes people afraid.

When the container is empty take the other stack of cards or papers with Bible verses that deal with fear (see supply list above).

One by one read the verses aloud. Have the children repeat the verses after you. Encourage the children to put their trust in God in response to what each verse is saying. After the verse is read place it in the empty container.

Explain the container parable by discussing these questions.

- Do you know what the container represents?
(The container represents a person's heart.)

- Do you know what taking slips of paper out and putting new ones in represents?
(The fear slips are the fearful thoughts in our hearts; the Bible verses are God's Word to give us strength and courage to trust in God.)

In God I Trust

Ask the children if they know anybody in the Bible that had courage and faith when they were afraid. (Take any correct answer.) Ask them where they think the courage came from. (God) How did they put the courage into practice? (faith)

Then ask for other people they may know who acted with courage in the face of fear. Perhaps police officers, soldiers, fire fighters, etc.

Review and recite Psalm 56:3-4: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid."

Remind the children that no matter how big their fear is, God is bigger.

PRAY 5 MIN

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

