



Joshua, Caleb, and the Spies

12

Key Themes

- God is faithful to His promises.
- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

Key Passages

- Numbers 13:26–28, 13:30–31, 14:9

Lesson Focus

- Joshua and Caleb were not afraid. They trusted God.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color the Giant Grapes and Giant People coloring sheet or make grapes and other fruit using play dough. Tell them they will hear about some very large grapes and some very large people today.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the Prayer page of the Flip Chart, discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—When the time came for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, they had a crisis of faith. Ten of the 12 spies who spied out the land were afraid of the giants in the land and of all their enemies. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, trusted God and were not afraid.

Song—Children will sing the “Goin’ to the Promised Land” jingle and the “12 Spies!” song.



Activity 1: Spy, Spy, Joshua! Caleb!

Students will play a game similar to duck, duck, goose. Only it will be spy, spy, Joshua! Spy, spy, Caleb!



Activity 2: Pocket Puppets

Students will color and then assemble pocket puppets of Joshua, Caleb, and a giant.



Memory Verse Review/Snack

Children will review the memory verse while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite or repeat the memory verse.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- Print one Giant Grapes and Giant People coloring sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Bring play dough.

- Giant Grapes and Giant People coloring sheet for each student
- Play dough and cookie cutters



CIRCLE TIME

- Practice the “Goin’ to the Promised Land” jingle and “12 Spies!” song. These may be found at the back of this Teacher Guide.
- Assemble the three pocket puppets to use as an illustration for the children.

- Stuffed animal for prayer time
- Lesson Flip Chart
- Various types of fruit—especially grapes if possible
- Pocket puppets you have assembled



SPY, SPY, JOSHUA! CALEB!

- No special preparation necessary.

- No special items needed



POCKET PUPPETS

- Print and cut out each of the Pocket Puppets—Joshua, Caleb, Giant—from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- All three pocket puppets for each student
- Crayons
- Tape
- Optional: Craft sticks



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW/SNACK

- Prepare and bring snacks.

- Flip Chart for memory verse review
- Snacks



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare for this lesson, read Exodus 23:20–33 and Numbers 13–14.

“To your descendants I will give this land” (Genesis 12:7). God had promised an inheritance to Abraham—and as the years went by it was passed to Isaac (Genesis 26:3), Jacob (Genesis 35:11–12), and Moses (Exodus 3:7–10). The Lord’s promise to Moses as He commissioned him to enter the Promised Land was to send an angel before them to keep them in the way. God would drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land and bless the Israelites as they walked in obedience to God’s commands (Exodus 23:20–23).

The Israelites witnessed the protection and omnipotence of God as he wiped out an entire army and delivered His children from harm (Exodus 14:28) and as He provided water from a rock (Exodus 17:6), bread from heaven (Exodus 16:14–15), and meat from the wind (Numbers 11:31). They had seen His presence in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21). Yet they continued to doubt God, disobey Him, and complain of their hardships.

With the land of Canaan in their sights, the Israelites revealed their complete lack of faith and trust in God. The 12 spies were sent—each a representative of the tribe of their fathers—including Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 13:1–16). The land was indeed abundant in milk and honey and fruit just as God had promised (Numbers 13:27). Yet most of the spies, upon seeing the strong people, the fortified cities, and the giant descendants of Anak in the land, were overcome by fear (Numbers 13:28–39). Only Joshua and Caleb spoke favorably of the land, pleading with the Israelites to have courage and faith in God’s promises—and to trust that the Lord was with them—there was nothing to fear (Numbers 14:6–9).

Their cries to the people went unheeded—the Israelites refused to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:2) and threatened to kill both Caleb and Joshua (Numbers 14:10). God’s judgment was both merciful and righteous as He pardoned their rebellion (Numbers 14:20) yet decreed that they would not enter into Canaan to see the land sworn to their fathers—none who had rejected God would ever see it (Numbers 14:23). All but Caleb, Joshua, and those under 20 years old would die in the wilderness and never see the fulfillment of the promise (Numbers 14:29–31).

God is the same God today as He was then—He is immutable—He does not change. We can stand on the promises as revealed in His Word just as surely as Caleb and Joshua believed Him in the wilderness. He will not let us down; He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

When the Israelites left Egypt, we are told that there were “about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock” (Exodus 12:37–38). In the second year after the Exodus, a census revealed that there were 603,550 men from 20 years old and above (Numbers 1:46). And later, about 38 years after the first census, just before Israel was to enter the Promised Land, the total number of men 20 and older came to 601,730 (Numbers 26:51). Many have estimated that when women and children are added, the total number of Israelites would have been between 2 and 3 million. That is quite a throng of people to oversee, feed, care for, and move around the desert for forty years.

Because of this seemingly impossible task, some have inferred that the number of Israelites was likely tens of thousands rather than millions. It is true that from a purely natural perspective it doesn’t seem possible that several million people could survive in the desert all those years. Critics have mentioned the amount of food needed, the waste that would be produced, the logistics of moving such a large group of people, the space required for camping, etc.

What many people fail to understand is that the Lord supernaturally cared for His people for 40 years:

He . . . fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years (Deuteronomy 8:3–4).

He provided quail and manna for them to eat (Exodus 16:13–15), water when they thirsted (Exodus 17:1–7), and even clothing that did not wear out. This sojourn in the wilderness was far from a natural phenomenon, beginning with God appearing in the burning bush (Exodus 3:1–5) to the display of His omnip-

otence during the plagues that seized Egypt (Exodus 7–11) to the crossing of the Red Sea—the preservation of the Israelites and the destruction of the entire Egyptian army (Exodus 14). God Himself had brought His people out of Egypt, and He had decreed that they would wander for 40 years. As the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, caring for them was a simple task—for nothing is impossible for our all-powerful God (Luke 1:37).

The Bible is full of the evidence of God’s ability to rule over natural laws. From creation, to the Flood, to the virgin birth of Christ, to His myriad of supernatural miracles while on earth, to His resurrection and ascension—He has established that He controls all things. As Christians, we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). That faith should lead us to allow God to be God—and not insist that he “prove” Himself according to our desires.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There were giants in the Promised Land—the descendants of Anak (Numbers 13:33). As the Israelites were about to take possession of this land, the fear of facing these giants in battle kept them from moving forward, trusting God for protection, and finally seeing the land of Canaan.

Although the people were convinced not to attempt to fight the giants this time and ran in fear, we are told that Joshua, in God’s strength, later led a force against the Anakim (Joshua 11:21).

But the giants remained. And it was from Gath that the Philistine warrior Goliath would later threaten. Here again a giant stood before the army of God’s chosen people and intimidated them (1 Samuel 17:4–11). This one man terrorized the entire Israelite army to the point that they would doubt God’s ability to fight for them (1 Samuel 17:24).

There will always be the courageous few whose trust in God will bear witness to His faithfulness. In the account of the 12 spies, God’s strength accom-

panied Joshua and Caleb. In the account of Goliath, God’s strength is revealed through David as he takes down the giant that an entire army cowered from.

Throughout the history of mankind, circumstances have threatened to sway our trust in the faithfulness of God. In spite of the abundant promises He makes to us in His Word, we are often tempted to believe the world and deny our Creator. But we can learn from Joshua who said, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

And we can learn from David, the shepherd boy, who courageously spoke to the giant Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (1 Samuel 17:45). Our God is a mighty God. He is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, as I prepare this lesson, please prepare my heart as well. Help me to know your faithfulness. Help me to rely on the promises you have made in your Word. Lord, I am often afraid like the Israelites. When I get afraid, please bring back to my remembrance the faith of Joshua and Caleb—how they believed you, stood up for you, and did not fear! As I teach this week, Lord, please open the hearts of the children to your truths and give them more confidence in you as the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God you are. As they learn who you are, grant to them a trust in you that will not be shaken.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color the Giant Grapes and Giant People coloring sheet or make grapes and other fruit out of play dough.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class. Remember, children learn by repetition and review.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the lesson pages from the Flip Chart. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, various types of fruit—grapes if possible, Pocket Puppets you have completed, and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets a turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

We start our Bible Study with prayer. Let's pray. *Turn to the Prayer page in the Flip Chart. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.*

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Adoration is suggested. You might proceed this way.

Today let's say prayers of adoration—and tell God how much we love Him.

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their confidence in praying to God.

I'll start. Dear God, you are so great and powerful. I love and adore you because . . . *(insert personal prayer here).*

- Before making your transition to circle time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.
- Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the circle time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle, giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer telling God they love Him.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first four questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

? **Before we begin, what is this?** *Hold up your Bible. The Bible!*

? **What is in this Bible?** *God's Holy Word!*

? **What does the Bible tell us?** *Everything we need to know!*

? **And all God's Words in this Bible are what?** *True!*

We are going to learn about spies today! Do you know what a spy is? *Allow discussion.*

A spy is someone who is sneaky. *Get up, crouch down and pretend to sneak around the circle. Allow all the children to "sneak" about in the circle. Spies try to watch and see what is going on while they are sneaking about.* *Make a motion like you are looking through a spyglass while you are crouching and sneaking. Again let children follow your lead and act like spies.*

We are going to hear about 12 spies! *Have the children return to their seats, refer to the Flip Chart and count the spies with the children.*

The spies we are going to talk about were sent by Moses to spy out the special Promised Land God had promised them. God told the people to take the land from the people who lived there. God said that He would protect them. They needed God's protection because they had to fight the people in the land to get it from them.

The Israelites were almost there. They were almost to the Promised Land. They could see it. But before they went in, Moses sent spies to the land to see how it was. He sent 12 spies. *Refer to the Flip Chart and count them with the children.* The spies went in the land and it was a wonderful land; it was good and rich and the forests were thick. The land was just like God had said it would be.

? **How many spies did Moses send in to the land?** *12 spies. Refer to the Flip Chart.*

Yes. Moses sent 12 spies into the land. Listen carefully while I read from God's true Word, the Bible. **God tells us what the spies saw!** *Read Numbers 13:26–28, emphasizing that they brought back fruit. But the people of the land were strong, and the cities were large.*

? **What did the spies bring back to Moses and the rest of the people?** *The fruit of the land. Numbers 13:26. Bring out fruit if you brought any in.*

That's right. The spies came back and said the land was flowing with milk and honey. They brought the fruit from the land—and it was big, wonderful, delicious fruit. The fruit they brought back was not like this fruit. *Show your bunch of grapes and fruit.* In fact, the Bible tells us that they

► As you teach, refer often to the Flip Chart picture to keep the children engaged.

Numbers 13:26–28

► As you ask these questions, reread the appropriate parts of the Scripture so the children can hear the answers from the text.

brought a bunch of grapes back with them that had to be carried by two people! This really was a very good land. Those were really big grapes!

But the people saw something else. Listen again. What else did the spies see? *Reread Numbers 13:28, emphasizing that the people in the land were strong.*

? What did the spies see? *The spies saw that the people were very big and strong.*

Yes! The people in the land were very big and very strong. And the cities were protected by walls and soldiers! The Israelites were afraid. They didn't believe there was any way they could get the land from these giants and fight all of their enemies. Ten of the spies were scared. But two of them were not afraid. The two spies who were not afraid were Caleb and Joshua. *Refer to the Flip Chart. I want to read something to you. Listen to what Caleb and Joshua said to the people. Read Numbers 13:30–31.*

Numbers 13:30–31

? What did Caleb say? *We can do it! God is with us.*

? What did the other spies and the people say? *We can't do it. They are stronger than us!*

That's right. Ten spies were afraid and two were not. Joshua and Caleb were not afraid because they trusted God. They knew the land was good. They were NOT afraid. They told the people again! Listen carefully. *Read Numbers 14:9 to the students, emphasizing "do not fear the people" and "the Lord is with us."*

Numbers 14:9

? What did Joshua and Caleb say to the people? *Do not fear them.*

? Who was with the Israelites? *The Lord.*

Yes. The Lord was with them. That is why Joshua and Caleb were not afraid. They knew the Lord was with them. The Lord had promised to protect them. Joshua and Caleb believed the Lord, but the other spies did not! The other spies did not trust God and they did not want to go. They were afraid of the people.

Only Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord. They were not afraid of the giants. They believed the promise God made to them, that He would help them to conquer the land. The people would not listen to Joshua and Caleb. They did not obey God or trust Him. They were afraid. Because they were afraid and did not listen to Joshua and Caleb, God made them wander longer in the wilderness.

SONG

The people were afraid, even after all God had done for them. He saved them from the Egyptians, He parted the Red Sea so they would get across safely, and He provided food and water for them. But they wouldn't trust Him to help them beat the giants. So now they were going to wander even more. Let's sing our jingle, "Goin' to the Promised Land." Everybody up. Follow and repeat after me. *Sing/recite the "Goin' to the Promised Land" jingle.*

That was great. And now we have a song about the 12 Spies! *Sing the "12 Spies!" song with hand motions!*

► Musical instruments, marching, and motions can be added to this section to add interest and help learning.

Lyrics to the songs can be found on the Song page of the Flip Chart and in the back of this Teacher Guide.

Before we go back to our tables, we're going to play a game. It's called Spy, Spy, Joshua! Spy, Spy, Caleb! See below. Explain the game to the children.

Spy, Spy, Joshua! Caleb!

MATERIALS

- No special supplies needed

INSTRUCTIONS

While the children are still in the circle, play a game of *Spy, Spy, Joshua! Spy, Spy, Caleb!* similar to *duck, duck, goose*. Pick one child to be "it." This child will walk around the outside of the circle tapping the heads of the other children, saying *spy, spy, spy, spy*, until he decides to say *Joshua* or *Caleb*. Then the child who is "it" will begin to run and the last child tapped will try to catch him. If the child who is "it" gets to the empty chair first, the second child is then "it."

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

There were 12 spies and only two of them trusted God. Only Joshua and Caleb were not afraid of the big people in the land. They knew the Lord was with them. The Lord had promised to protect them.

Let's all quietly, like spies, go back to our tables. We are going to make some puppets of Joshua, Caleb, and one of the giants! Show the children the puppets you have assembled.

Pocket Puppets

MATERIALS

- Three Pocket Puppets (Joshua, Caleb, and the giant) already cut out for each student
- Tape
- Optional: Craft sticks to attach to the puppet

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the children color the three pocket puppets. Fold each puppet in half. Help the students tape each puppet's

sides together. Leave the bottom open for them to put their hands in. If you prefer a stick puppet, you can add a craft stick to the bottom of the puppet.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Joshua and Caleb were not afraid of the giants in the Promised Land. They knew that God had promised to protect them, and they trusted God to keep that promise.

Memory Verse Review/Snack

Exodus 20:1–3 And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the Lord your God . . . You shall have no other gods before Me."

After thanking God for your snack, review the memory verse with the children while enjoying the snack for the day. You may want to use the snack as incentive to recite or repeat the memory verse.

Use the Memory Verse page in the Flip Chart. Explain the verse to the children as you go over the verse together. Say the verse and point at each picture several times. Ask the children if anyone wants to try to say it on their own.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

God had led the Israelites a long way. While the people were still slaves in Egypt God promised them a special land—the Promised Land. They wandered in the wilderness a long time following God's direction. God fed them and provided for their needs in the wilderness. And finally God brought them to the land that was to be theirs. Moses sent 12 spies into the land to see what it was like. The land was wonderful but the people were big and strong! Ten of the spies came back and said, "We are afraid! The people are too big and strong! We could never win a war with them."

Two of the spies trusted God and believed His promise to protect them. Those spies were Joshua and Caleb. They were not afraid of the big people and the strong cities. They told the people that the Lord was with them. But the people wouldn't listen to Joshua and Caleb. God's people had to wander again for a long time in the wilderness.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Sometimes we get afraid, don't we? Maybe it is something like bad weather, or our dog getting lost, or someone being sick, or having to move away, or change schools, or go to a different church. These things can scare us. But God wants us to remember that He is with us. Joshua and Caleb knew that and God gave them courage. They trusted God. God wants us to trust Him, too—even when things are really hard. He promises that He will be with us and help us through even the hardest things.

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for the day, your church, and the pastor.
- Thank Him that if we trust Him, we will not need to be afraid.
- Pray that He would open the minds of the children in your class to really trust Him, to believe His promises, and have faith in all of His Word.

Do you still have more time? Review the past quarters using the Flip Charts, add another coloring page, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, or bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

GOIN' TO THE PROMISED LAND

(Similar to "Goin' on a Lion Hunt" jingle for children)

Goin' to the Promised Land. *Children repeat.*
Wave goodbye.

God's on our side. *Children repeat.*
Point up to God.

We're not afraid! *Children repeat.*
Hands on hips, look brave.

What's that? *Children repeat.*
Look around with hands above eyes—scared!

Pharaoh's army! *Children repeat.*
Hands on face, look scared!

They are behind us— *Children repeat.*
Look behind you.

Red Sea is in front of us— *Children repeat.*
Look in front of you.

God will provide! *Children repeat.*
Point up to God.

Goin' to the Promised Land. *Children repeat.*
Wave goodbye.

God's on our side. *Children repeat.*
Point up to God.

We're not afraid! *Children repeat.*
Hands on hips, look brave.

What's that? *Children repeat.*
Look around—scared.

The Red Sea! *Children repeat.*
Eyes wide, look scared.

Can't go over it. *Children repeat.*
Move both arms in an upward arc.

Can't go under it. *Children repeat.*
Move both arms in a downward arc.

Have to walk THROUGH it! *Children repeat.*
March in place.

Goin' to the Promised Land. *Children repeat.*
Wave goodbye.

God's on our side. *Children repeat.*
Point up to God.

We're not afraid! *Children repeat.*
Hands on hips, look brave.

God's on our side! *Children repeat.*
Point up to God.

12 SPIES!

(To the tune of "Ten Little Indians")

One little, two little, three little spies,
(One little, two little, three little Indians,)
Count off fingers as you sing.

Four little, five little, six little spies,
(Four little, five little, six little Indians,)
Count off fingers as you sing.

Seven little, eight little, nine little spies.
(Seven little, eight little, nine little Indians,)
Count off fingers as you sing.

Ten spies who were afraid.
(Ten little Indian boys!)
Look afraid!

Joshua and Caleb trusted God.
Hold up index fingers as you say the names. Look up and point up.

They went to the land and saw it was good;
March in place and look very happy!

The grapes were giant and the people too.
Keep marching. Reach up to "measure" a tall person.

The Lord said, "I will help you."
Look up and point up.

Joshua and Caleb were not afraid.
Look up and point up—shake head "no."

They said, "Let's go! We can win this war!"
Move your arm as though you are motioning "come on."

But the others said, "No, we just can't go—"
Hands to your face, look scared and shake head "no!"

We don't trust the Lord!"
With palms down, wave your hands shake your head "no."