

Joshua & Caleb

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13–14

STORY POINT: Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land.

MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 3:5-6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

Parent Devotional

Before God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, He promised to bring the Israelites back to the land He had given to Abraham so many years before. (Ex. 3:8) From Egypt, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and traveled toward Mount Sinai. When they were hungry and thirsty, God provided food and water. (See Ex. 16–17.) Israel spent one year at Mount Sinai, where Moses received God’s law, including the Ten Commandments.

Time and again, the Israelites rebelled against God, Moses interceded, and God pardoned the people. When Israel arrived at the edge of the promised land, God instructed Moses to send scouts into the land. Moses sent out a leader from each tribe. Twelve men, including Joshua and Caleb, traveled through the promised land of Canaan for 40 days. They returned with fruit—grapes, pomegranates, and figs—and gave a report on the land.

The scouts described the land’s abundance, as “flowing with milk and honey.” They gave an account of the people, various tribes who were physically strong and whose cities were fortified. Caleb’s immediate imperative—“Let’s go up now!”—was met with resistance by most of the group. Assessing their own strength against the strength of the inhabitants, they concluded that to move forward would mean certain defeat.

The Israelites complained: “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness!” Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade the people of God’s presence and protection, but the people would not trust God. So God gave them what they thought was better. He sent them into the wilderness to wander for 40 years. They would die there. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites’ children would enter the promised land.

Help the kids you teach contemplate the punishment Israel faced for their failure to trust God and their rebellion. Point out that, as sinners, we have all disobeyed God. But Jesus trusted God perfectly and took the punishment for our rebellion. When we look to Him for salvation, we have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

KINDERGARTEN - 5TH GRADE BIBLE STORY

Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 13–14

God's people had traveled out of Egypt and were almost to the promised land. God told Moses to send men to scout out the land of Canaan (KAY nuhn). This is the land God was giving to the Israelites.

So Moses sent out one leader from each family tribe. Moses told the leaders to see what the land was like, and whether the people living there were strong or weak, few or many. Moses had many questions: Is the land good or bad? Are the cities they live in camps or forts? Is the land good for farming? Are there any trees?

Moses urged the scouts to be courageous. So the twelve scouts traveled throughout the land for 40 days. They cut down a cluster of grapes that was so big it took two men to carry it on a pole. Then they went back to tell Moses, Aaron, and the other Israelites what they saw.

"The land is good. It is flowing with milk and honey," they said. "But the people who live there are strong, and the cities they live in are large and well protected."

Then Caleb, one of the men sent to scout out the land, said, "We must go up and take possession of the land! We can certainly conquer it with God's help!"

But other men disagreed. "We can't go up against the people! They are stronger than we are. We looked like grasshoppers compared to them!"

The people were afraid, and they cried all night. They thought Moses and Aaron had brought them to Canaan to die. The Israelites said, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"

Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and said again, "The land we explored is extremely good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will give it to us. Don't be afraid of the people living in the land; God is with us!"

The Lord spoke to Moses: "How long will these people not trust Me?" God threatened to destroy all the people, but Moses urged God to forgive them. Moses reminded God that He is patient, loving, and forgiving.

Since Caleb and Joshua had followed God completely, God decided to let them enter the promised land. God said that the Israelites who did not trust Him would wander in the wilderness 40 years, and they would not enter the promised land. All of the spies who went to scout out the land died before entering, except for Joshua and Caleb.

Christ Connection: The Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He took the punishment we deserve for our sin, or rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

Memory Verse:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

K-5th DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

How did Moses pick the 12 men to go scout out the land? (*Moses picked a leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Num. 13:4-16*)

What did the scouts report about the land? (*It was good, flowing with milk and honey, but defended by strong people with fortified cities; Num. 13:27-29*)

Who trusted God? (*Only Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give them the land. The other scouts were afraid; Num. 14:6-9*)

Was it sinful for the 10 scouts to feel afraid? *Guide the kids to discuss the idea that feeling afraid is not sinful. We are humans and sometimes we will face things that scare us. The 10 scouts who were afraid sinned when they doubted God and did not trust Him to give them the land He promised.*

Why do you think God allows us to go through difficult or scary circumstances? *Help kids see that when we face hard times we learn to trust Him. Remind the kids that asking for help is wise. We never have to face scary times alone.*

How can trusting God help us face our fears? *Guide kids to think about who God is and what He can do. Lead them to see that He has promised His people eternal life through Jesus. When we trust Jesus, we know that no difficult situation lasts forever. We always have hope. We can persevere through hard times by remembering what Jesus did to save us.*

Say • Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land. The other scouts were afraid and sinned when they doubted God. When we are afraid, we can choose to trust God.

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Leviticus 1–5. Encourage them to look through the headings and identify how many different types of offerings are listed. (burnt offering, grain offering, fellowship offering, sin offering, guilt offering)

Say • In addition to specific offerings, God gave specific times for feasts and other sacred days in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Many of those days required the people to rest. God wanted them to recognize that He would provide for them as long as they worshiped Him. He required the Israelites to rest and remember all that He had already done for them.

Journal and prayer

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

ACTIVITIES AND CRAFTS

Option 1: Chopstick challenge

Form two teams of kids. Give each team a pair of chopsticks and take a few minutes learning to use them. Instruct teams to line up on opposite sides of the room facing one another. In the center of the room, scatter paper wads. When you say go, the first player on each team will walk to the center of the room, pick up a paper wad with the chopsticks, and carry it back to his team. He will then give the chopsticks to the next player, who will return for another paper wad. Play continues in this way until kids gather all the paper wads from the center of the room. The team with the most paper wads wins.

Say • Great job gathering those paper wads! Using chopsticks can be tricky if you have never learned how. In China, chopsticks are the most common utensil used for eating solid food. Forks are rare! Sadly, people in China who know about Jesus are also somewhat rare. More than one billion people live in China, and most of them do not believe the gospel of Jesus. As we learn about the importance of trusting God and what it means to sin, pray each day this week that missionaries in China will be able to reach more people there with the good news of Jesus. That way, the Chinese people can learn to trust God and turn from sin!

Option 2: Grape clusters

Provide circles of purple construction paper or purple sticky notes. Invite the kids to write on multiple circles things they need God's help with. Remind them that it can be anything from a test or quiz at school to a frustrating situation at home to a game or competition with their sports team. Help the kids tape their "grapes" to a green chenille stem to look like a vine. Invite the kids to take their cluster home and pluck off a grape each day to pray about the thing they wrote down.

Say • Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land. Trusting God is important. Only He has the power to help us through any situation. When we don't trust God, we sin. *What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God or His commands.* God sent Jesus to pay the price of our sins, and when we trust in Him, God forgives our sin and promises us eternal life with Him.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word gospel. Clarify that the word gospel means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.