

LESSON 10

RAHAB AND THE SPIES

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Joshua, the New Leader

At the beginning of the Book of Joshua, the Israelites were camped along the east bank of the Jordan River at the very edge of the promised land, and they were completing the mourning period for Moses (Deut 34:7-8). Joshua had succeeded Moses as Israel's new leader. Because Joshua had assisted Moses for many years, he was well prepared to take over the leadership of the nation.

Joshua's job consisted of leading more than two million people into a strange new land and conquering it after thirty-nine years of wandering in the wilderness. But Joshua was not afraid. When God commissioned him, the Lord told Joshua three times to be strong and courageous (Josh 1:6-7, 9). Joshua took God's message to heart. He found the strength and courage he needed from God to lead the Israelites.

The City of Jericho

The nation of Israel was about to enter Canaan, the land promised to them by God. But before they arrived at their final destination, God had work for the Israelites to do at Jericho, which was a city about five miles west of the Jordan River. This city was the gateway to the hill country of Canaan, which the Israelites would set out to conquer.

Jericho was a beautiful tropical oasis known as the city of palm trees (Deut 34:3). A huge wall surrounded the city. Jericho also had its own army, making it one of the strongest of the walled cities. The people of Jericho practiced idolatry, religious prostitution, and infant sacrifice. Israel's conquest of this city was part of God's punishment on the people of Jericho for their sins (Gen 15:16).

Rahab

The Bible says that Rahab was a harlot. Traditionally, that would mean Rahab was a woman who was immoral with many men. Due to her low status, she lived on the edge of society, just short of being rejected. Her house, built right into the city wall, provided both lodging and favors to travelers. It was a natural place for the Israelite spies to stay, as they would be mistaken for Rahab's customers.

Stories about the Israelites had been circulating for some time, but it was now evident that the Israelites were about to invade. Living in the wall, Rahab felt especially vulnerable. Yet, while she was just as afraid as the rest of the people of Jericho, she was the only one who turned to the God of Israel for salvation.

Her faith gave her the courage to hide the spies. Rahab knew her position was dangerous; she could have been killed if she were caught harboring the Israelites. But Rahab took the risk because she knew that the Israelites relied on God, who was worth trusting. God rewarded Rahab by promising safety for her and her family.

BIBLE TEXT

Joshua 1-2

BIBLE TRUTHS

1. God wants us to be strong and courageous.
2. God wants us to put our trust in Him in our everyday lives.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To rely on God no matter what the circumstances are.
2. To understand that God gives us strength to be brave and courageous.

MEMORY VERSE

"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

(Isaiah 40:31)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for letting us come to learn more about You. Please help us to be strong and courageous like Joshua, Rahab, and the two Israelite spies in today's story. We know that no matter what happens, we can trust You to help us every time and everywhere. Hallelujah! Amen.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Helping children to develop trust in God is an ongoing and important task. Psalm 22:9 says, “You made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts.” Trust sets the foundation for all other social and emotional developments to come. When children realize that God, their environment, and the people around them are trustworthy, they feel secure, hopeful, and optimistic.

Students at this age often believe out of fear that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere. Therefore, it is important to help them understand God’s love and tenderness. Ask students to share how they have experienced God’s love in their family, at school, and in their everyday life by giving specific examples.

God promises that “those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength” (Isa 40:31). Please use this memory verse as a discussion starter to talk to your students about trust.

Here are some questions you can ask:

1. What does the word trust mean to you? What does it take to fully trust in God? How does trusting in God make you strong?
2. How trusting are you? How trustworthy would others say you are?
3. How does it feel when you break a promise, or when someone breaks a promise to you?

Rahab trusted that the Lord would save her and her family. Because of her faith in the true God, she and her whole family were saved. They began new lives with the Israelites, and Rahab married a man named Salmon, becoming an ancestress of King David and ultimately of the Messiah.

VOCABULARY

- scarlet:** a bright red color
- strength:** the quality of being strong
- trust in God:** to rely on God for what is to come
- spy:** someone who secretly tries to find out about another place or person
- flax plants:** tall, skinny plants with stringy fibers; used to make linen cloth

REVIEW

Last week, we learned how the Israelites moved to the land of Moab. When the people of Moab saw the large number of Israelites, how did they feel? (They were afraid of them.) What did Balak the king of Moab do? (He sent for Balaam to come and curse them.)

At first, Balaam did not go because the Lord told him not to. When Balak asked again, though, what did Balaam do? (He decided to go.) What strange thing happened while he was on his way? (Balaam’s donkey started to talk.) Why did she start to talk? (Balaam had beaten her three times and she asked him why he did this.)

Why did the Lord send an Angel to stop Balaam? (The Lord was angry with how greedy Balaam was.) When the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, he saw that there was an Angel of the Lord standing there with a sword in His hand. He realized that the donkey had saved his life.

What happened when Balaam got to the place where he was to curse the Israelites? (God put words of blessing in his mouth and Balaam blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them.) We learned from the story of Balaam that we should obey God with our hearts as well as our actions.

BIBLE STORY

City of Jericho

Today’s story took place more than three thousand years ago, when the sign of a scarlet cord saved the lives of two men, a woman, her father and mother, her sisters and brothers, and perhaps others. Thousands died because they did not have this scarlet cord. [Take out a red cord to show students as you introduce the story.]

On the other side of the Jordan River, several miles from the Israelites’ camp, stood a large city called Jericho. [Show a map or draw one on the board and point out to students where the Jordan River and the city of Jericho were located.] A high wall had been built around this city to keep out the enemies. The city of Jericho had many idols and gods that their people worshiped.

One day, the king of Jericho heard that a great crowd of people, the Israelites, were marching up from Egypt toward them. Word came that these people had a living God who worked with them—a God who separated the waters of the Red Sea so that they could walk across on dry land. Everyone in Jericho was frightened. They waited to see what would happen when the Israelites arrived in their land.

Joshua, the New Leader

After Moses died, God spoke to Joshua and said, “Moses My servant is dead. As I was with Moses, so will I be with you. I will never leave you or abandon you. Now be strong and brave, because you will lead these people to the land I promised to give them.

“Be strong and brave. Be careful to obey all the laws Moses gave to you, and you will do well wherever you go. Think about all the commands I have given you and be careful to follow all of them. Be strong and brave, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” [Imitate God’s firm but loving voice as you retell this message to the students.]

God truly loved Joshua and wanted to encourage him not to be afraid of all the responsibilities that he had taken over from Moses. Joshua was indeed strengthened by God’s words. So he told his leaders to go through the camp and say to the people, “Get everything ready that you will need! In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

Joshua Sends Out Two Spies

While the Israelites were getting ready, Joshua secretly sent two men as spies from their camp at Acacia to the land of Canaan. [Refer back to the map and show where the spies crossed the Jordan River to the land of Canaan.] Why do you think Joshua sent spies to Jericho first? [Encourage students to respond.]

They were to learn all they could about that city. Because Jericho was such a large city, Joshua believed that the Israelites should learn more about its location, people, and army before they could take it over.

When the two spies came to Jericho, they found the city gates open, so they walked in. They came to a house where a woman named Rahab lived. At first, Rahab did not know that they were spies sent by Joshua to learn everything they could about the city. She took them in.

But someone must have seen them going into her house because a messenger went to the king and said, “There are two spies from Israel here in our city.” The king immediately sent soldiers to Rahab’s house to arrest them.

Rahab Hides the Spies

Soon afterwards, there was a strong, loud knock at Rahab’s door. We can imagine that the soldiers shouted, “Open in the name of the king!” Rahab rushed over to the two spies and said to them, “Come with me to the roof.”

When they got up to the roof, they saw great big piles of flax plants drying on the roof.

Back then, flax was a fiber used to make linen. Rahab got the idea to pile that flax right on top of the two men. Do you think the spies ever imagined that there would be somebody in Jericho who would protect them? [Ask students to pretend to be the spies being hidden on the roof by Rahab. How did they feel? What did they think? Allow time for students to respond.] God had sent them to the right house.

When Rahab finally came to the door, the soldiers asked her about the two men. Rahab said, “Yes, the men came to me, and I did not know where they had come from. But they have gone. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them.”

Without searching the house, the king’s officers hurriedly left and went through the city and out the gate toward the Jordan River, feeling sure the spies must have gone that way. It never occurred to them that one of their own people would hide spies from Israel. Since the city gates were now locked, this meant that the two spies were trapped inside Jericho and would not be able to return to their camp.

Rahab Pleads for the Lives of Her Family

Rahab hurried back to the roof where she had hidden the men. She said to them, “I know that your God is going to give my country to you. We have heard how your God has worked miracles for you, and we are afraid. We have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea so you could leave Egypt. We also know how He destroyed Sihon and Og, those two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. I believe that your God is the true God of heaven and of all the world.”

Rahab’s heart had indeed been changed by God. Rahab was not saved because she was good, or because she had done good works. It was because God’s mercy had worked in her heart and gave her a living faith toward God. Now she believed that the God of Israel was really the true God.

Do you know what faith is? [Pause for students to share.] True faith means believing that God will do what He says. Rahab had heard about God. She hadn’t witnessed any of the things that He had done, yet she believed that God was going to do what He said. She showed her faith by her actions. Even though she was risking her life, Rahab helped the Israelite spies because they were of God’s people.

And now Rahab had something to ask of the two spies.

“I beg you for this one thing,” she said, “because of my kindness toward you, promise me that when Jericho is conquered, you will be as kind to my family as I have been to you.”

Because Rahab had faith, the spies promised and said, “If you save our lives, we will save yours! Keep quiet

about what we are doing, and we promise to be kind to you when the Lord gives us this land.”

The Promise of a Scarlet Cord

Rahab told the spies, “Hide in the hills! The soldiers who are looking for you won’t be able to find you there. They will give up and return after three days. Then you can leave.” After this, she let them down by a rope through a window of her house, which was built into the city wall.

Before the spies left, they told Rahab, “We will keep the promise we made to you. But this scarlet cord must be tied on your window when we take the land. Also, your parents, your brothers, and everyone else in your family must be here with you. If any of them leave the house, they will be killed, and it will be their fault. But we will take the blame if anyone in this house is hurt. Also, if you tell anybody why we were here, we won’t have to keep our promise.”

“I’ll do exactly as you say,” Rahab promised, and she said goodbye to them. The spies left, and she tied the scarlet cord to the window immediately.

The Spies Escape Safely

For three days, the spies hid in the hills while the king’s men searched for them along every road. After the men had given up and gone back, the two spies left the hills and crossed the river.

When they returned to Joshua, they told him everything that had happened. They said, “Surely God has given this beautiful country to us, for the people are afraid of us and they are too weak to fight against us and drive us out of their land.”

Do you think that Rahab’s family will be saved when

Joshua takes the land? We will find out next week!

Why Scarlet?

Here is a question for you to think about: do you know why God chose a scarlet-colored cord? [Pause for students to respond.]

Let’s look at Hebrews 9:22b together. The Bible says that “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” That’s why our Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the cross to cleanse all our sins. This means that the scarlet cord represented God’s forgiveness and mercy towards Rahab.

Has there ever been a moment when you have trusted our Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins? Have you done and said things that are displeasing to God? Today, let’s take some time to think about the wrongs we have done, and thank our heavenly Father for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to save us.

Let’s not forget to trust God in our everyday life and believe that what He says is true. Rahab showed her faith by her actions. Can you list a few things she did? [Have students summarize Rahab’s actions, and list the following points on the board.]

1. She put her life in God’s hands and helped God’s people.
2. She was obedient and did what she was told.
3. She witnessed to her family. She told them about the scarlet cord.

What are some actions you can do to show your faith to God? [As the concluding activity, have students share their thoughts and come up to the board to write them.]

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **After Moses died, who became the new leader, and what did God tell him?** Joshua. God told him to be strong and brave, for God would be with him wherever he went.
2. **Why did Joshua send the two spies to the city of Jericho?** Joshua wanted the spies to learn all they could about Jericho. Because Jericho was such a large city, Joshua believed that the Israelites would need to capture it before they could go further into Canaan.
3. **Where did the two spies stay once they entered Jericho?** They went to Rahab’s house.
4. **How did Rahab save the spies?** She covered them with flax plants and hid them on the roof, and later told them to hide in the hills for three days before returning to the Israelite camp.
5. **What did the spies promise Rahab?** As long as Rahab tied the scarlet cord on her window and gathered all her family into her house, their lives would be saved when the Israelites came to take the land.
6. **How have our sins been cleansed today?** The Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross for us.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isaiah 40:31)

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." (Isaiah 40:31)
2. C
3. A
4. False; Rahab hid them on her roof.
5. True
6. scarlet/red, window
7. Joshua
8. Answers may vary.
9. Answers may vary.

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. Trust that God will take care of you no matter what happens.

Have you ever played the game "Trust Walk," where your eyes are blindfolded and you have to trust and follow someone else's lead to get to your destination? If not, you will get to play it during activity time [see Activity 1 for game instructions]. Since you cannot see in this game, you have no choice but to trust your partner to guide you every step of the way to wherever you are going.

Living our life is like being blindfolded, as we do not know what will happen to us in the next hour, next minute, or even next second. God is our Savior, our protector, and our guardian. He wants us to trust Him even when we don't know what is going to happen next.

Spend some quiet time in your room or in your prayers and think of all the blessings you have received from God. As you recall each blessing, remember to store God's love deeply in your heart. Remind yourself to trust God, for He will take care of you no matter what happens.

[You may want to ask your students to write or draw one blessing they have received from God during class time. Students can create a Blessing Book, pre-folded and stapled by you, which they can periodically fill in as they experience God's grace. This is a project that can be coordinated with parents so that there is accountability and continuity.]

2. God gives us strength to be brave and courageous.

Joshua and Rahab were both brave and courageous in their own ways. Joshua was not intimidated or scared when he saw the high city wall of Jericho and its massive security force because he knew that God was with him.

Rahab faced great danger in saving God's people, but she put her life in God's hands because she knew that God was merciful and almighty. Have you ever experienced that kind of courage and bravery because you know that God is with you?

Now, everyone close your eyes as you answer these questions [Wait until all eyes are closed to ask the questions. Tell students to answer them honestly.]:

1. Raise your hand if you have ever prayed to God to give you strength because you were afraid. Keep your eyes closed! If your hand is up now, try to remember what made you afraid and how God helped you after your prayer. Now open your eyes. [Ask students to voluntarily share how God made them brave.]
2. Close your eyes again for this question. Raise your hand if you have ever prayed in front of your friends before eating your lunch at school. Now open your eyes. [Ask students to voluntarily share why they do or don't say lunch grace in front of their friends.]

God wants us not to be afraid and to put our faith into everyday actions. [Encourage students to think of a daily action they can do to practice putting their faith into action. Brainstorm with the whole class on the kinds of things they can do to be courageous and faithful. Have students come up to the board to write down their ideas.]

 ACTIVITIES

1

Trust Walk

Objective: To allow students to experience the levels of difficulty involved in trusting others and be encouraged to trust in God at all times.

Materials

- Scarf for blindfold
- An object

Instructions

1. Have students take turns leading one another around the classroom. The person being led should wear a blindfold.
2. First, have the guide hold his or her partner's elbow but say nothing during the walk. The pair should walk around the classroom without any obstacles.
3. Next, keep the person being led blindfolded. Then place an object somewhere in the classroom where the guide can see it.
4. Have the guide shout instructions from far away for the blindfolded person to find the object.
5. After the activity, discuss what makes trusting easy or difficult

2

Joshua, Rahab, and the Two Spies

Objectives: 1. To review the entire story through acting.
2. To experience these Bible characters' courageous actions of trusting in the Lord.

Materials

- Name cards attached to students to identify them
- Crown for the King
- Staff for Joshua
- Binoculars or a magnifying glass for the spies
- Shawl for Rahab
- Piece of red yarn for Rahab
- Paper or toy swords for the soldiers of Jericho
- Sign that says "Rooftop" and one that says "Window"

Cast

- A **narrator** (Teacher)
- One student to be **Joshua**
- Two students to be the Israelite **spies**
- One student to be **Rahab**
- One student to be the **king** of Jericho
- Two students to be **soldiers** of Jericho

Instructions

1. Place the rooftop sign on a tabletop and the window sign on the back of a chair.
2. Have the students act out the motions while you read the following lines. You may have them rehearse the skit or perform it impromptu. If the teacher is reading the lines for the students, the teacher must say the name of the character before reading the lines so the students will know when it is their turn to perform.

"Joshua, Rahab, and the Two Spies"

Prologue

[Narrator reads this to start the skit.]

The Bible tells us that Moses and the Israelites wandered in the desert for forty years without reaching the promised land. After Moses died, God told Joshua that he would become the new leader to fulfill His promise to His people.

Joshua would lead them into the promised land.

So Joshua assembled the Israelites and told them to get ready to cross the Jordan River to take over the land. Before they took over the land, Joshua chose two spies to check out one of the most wicked cities—Jericho. The spies entered the house of a harlot named Rahab.

The Bible tells us that Rahab and the people of that entire region had heard about the power of the God of Israel, and that everyone was very afraid. Because Rahab feared God, she wanted to help the spies by hiding them from the king of Jericho and his soldiers.

Joshua: *[Speaking to the spies.]* Go look over the land God promised to us, especially Jericho. Then report back to me. And remember what God told me, "Be strong and courageous because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go!"

Spies: *[Sneaking away, they find Rahab.]* Peace be with you! We need to hide from your king. Will you hide us and keep us safe?

Rahab: I have heard miraculous stories about how your God parted the Red Sea to help you escape from Egypt, and how your God defeated all the armies that came against you. I will hide you because I want to serve your God. Follow me to my rooftop and I'll cover you with these flax plants so no one will find you!

King: *[Speaking to his soldiers.]* I have heard that the Israelites are ready to take over our land. Go hunt their spies down and kill them before they have a chance to defeat us!

Soldiers: *[Looking for the spies but unable to find them.]* Oh spies, where are you? If we find you, we will kill you! Come out, come out, wherever you are!

[Soldiers find Rahab and speak to her.]

Soldiers: We have heard that you helped those Israelite spies. Where are they? Tell us now!

Rahab: The spies were here but they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly and you might catch them!

Soldiers: OK, Thanks!

[Soldiers run away looking for the spies.]

Rahab: Hey spies...the coast is clear. The soldiers are gone. You may come out!

Spies: Wow, that was close! Thank you for hiding us. We'll be going now.

Rahab: Wait a minute! Not so fast! Since I was kind to you, please protect my family from harm.

Spies: Your lives for our lives! If you don't tell on us, we will treat you kindly and protect you and your family when we invade Jericho and take over it.

Rahab: Here, crawl down this rope through the window. Then run to the hills and hide there until the soldiers come back to the city. Then you will know that it is safe for you to return to your camp.

Spies: As a sign of our promise to protect you, and your promise not to tell on us, when we enter the land to take it over, hang a scarlet colored cord in the window to show that you have kept your word. When we see the scarlet cord, we will know that you are on our side. God will then protect you and your family from harm when Jericho is destroyed.

Rahab: I will do as you say.

[Rahab ties the scarlet cord on the "window."]

Spies: *[Reporting back to Joshua.]* It is time to take over the land. Everyone is afraid of God's army. The Lord has surely given them and the land into our hands!

Joshua: Let's go and conquer the land that God promised to Abraham and all our descendants.

[Applaud students and ask them what they have learned from acting out the characters in the story.]

E1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 10—Rahab and the Spies

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

- Bible Truths:**
1. God wants us to be strong and courageous.
 2. God wants us to put our trust in Him in our everyday lives.

- Lesson Objectives:**
1. To rely on God no matter what the circumstances are.
 2. To understand that God gives us strength to be brave and courageous.

Bible Reading: Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Isaiah 40:31)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

1. Write down the memory verse for this week.

Multiple Choice

2. _____ : Why did Joshua send out two spies to check out the city of Jericho?
- Joshua was afraid of the king of Jericho.
 - Moses asked him to do so.
 - Jericho was a large city, and Joshua wanted the spies to find out everything they could about the city.
3. _____ : Where did Rahab tell the spies to hide from the soldiers after they left her house?
- In the hills
 - In someone else's house
 - By the river

True or False

4. When the soldiers knocked on Rahab's door to search for the spies, Rahab quickly hid them in her basement.

5. To trust God means to rely on Him for everything that happens. _____

Fill In the Blank

6. As the Israelite spies promised to save Rahab and her family's life, they gave her a _____ cord and asked her to tie it on the _____ as a mark.
7. After Moses died, God spoke to _____ and asked him to be the Israelites' new leader.
8. Imagine you were one of the two spies checking out the city of Jericho. What did you see and find? Picture that scene in your head and draw it in the space below.

Life Application

9. In what area(s) would you like God to help you become more strong and brave? For example, you may want to ask God to help you be brave while saying grace in front of your school friends during lunchtime.
