

# Rahab and the Spies

## Overview

### Materials You'll Need

- toilet paper rolls
- yarn
- scissors
- assorted stickers and scrap papers
- hole punch
- tape or stapler



### Scriptures

Josh 2:1-22

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

Only Jesus Christ alone can save us

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To be brave and courageous helpers of God; to identify ways we can be brave helpers

### Memory Verse

"He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Josh 2:11)



## Bible Knowledge

### Joshua, a New Leader

Joshua was selected by God to succeed Moses as the leader of the Israelites long before Moses' death (Num 27:15-23; Deut 31:14-15, 23). Before he led the people into the promised land, Joshua began as Moses' servant. He was on the mountain when Moses received the Ten Commandments (Ex 32:17). He was also one of the spies sent out to survey Canaan, and only he and Caleb returned with a favorable report of what they saw.

Joshua sent the spies secretly because the last time spies were sent, the report they brought back caused problems (see Num 13:1-14:4). While he did not want to move ahead without information, Joshua did not want to cause the people to stumble once more. Joshua was indeed a great military and spiritual leader.

### Rahab

There are some possible reasons why the spies stopped at the house of Rahab, the prostitute:

1. It was a good place to gather information and have no questions asked in return.
2. Rahab's house was in an ideal location for a quick escape because it was built into the city wall.
3. God directed the spies to Rahab's house because God knew her heart was open to Him and that she would be an instrument in the Israelites' victory over Jericho.

Even though Rahab was a heathen and a prostitute, she was willing to risk everything she had for God. She recognized that God is all-powerful. Her simple faith saved her entire household!

### City Walls

In Joshua's day, it was common to build houses on town walls. Many cities had two walls about 12 to 15 feet apart. Houses were built on wooden logs laid across the tops of the two walls. Rahab may have lived in such a house with a window that looked out over the outside wall.

Flax was harvested in the fields and piled high on the rooftops to dry. It was then made into yarn which was used to make linen cloth. Flax grows to a height of three or four feet. Stacked on the roof, it made an excellent hiding place for the spies.



## Understanding Your Students

Being courageous is a quality that is very difficult for children of all ages. Acts of courage usually involve a person having to stand up for another against a social group or in a dangerous situation. Having to stand out from a group of people to help another may be a serious concern for a lot of your students since acts of courage generally involve risks. Since the students are still young, you can start by encouraging them to help one another in all kinds of situations, in a supportive and risk-free classroom atmosphere. As they grow accustomed to assisting each other, it will become natural for them to want to help others in need, even if it might require them to take on courage to do so.

In the lesson you will be teaching today, it is pos-

sible that your students may question Rahab's actions in the story. In the biblical account, Rahab was forced to lie to the officers to protect Joshua's spies. Your students may wonder if it is okay for them to also lie to keep others from getting hurt. It is important for them to know that God does not want anyone to lie. We should never lie to hurt another people on purpose (Ex 20:16). However, we should need to remember the principle Jesus taught His disciples (be wise as serpent and harmless as dove, Mat 10:16). Even though we should not lie, we should also show discernment. We would not want our students telling strangers any information and may put them in danger. It is always important to encourage your students that God can provide a way out in any situation. In the same way, if your students are determined not to lie, God will surely help them.



## Vocabulary

### **Spy**

to watch someone in secret (verb); a person who is watching someone or something in secret (noun)

### **Flax**

a material from a plant used for making cloth like linen

### **Protect**

to keep someone or something safe from harm



## Before You Teach

Although it is true that Rahab had to tell a lie in order to save the lives of the spies, it is also true that it took great faith on her part to do so. She could not have predicted what the king's messengers might have done after she lied. They could have stormed into her home and searched her entire house. And if they had discovered the spies, her life, as well as that of her family's, could have very well been over.

When we read stories in the Bible, it always seems matter-of-fact that events unfold the way they do. But many acts recorded in the Scriptures took great faith to perform. We often say Abraham knew that God would keep His promise of giving him a son and that is why he did not hesitate to sac-

rifice Isaac. But how many of us could have done that without giving it a moment's thought? When Moses faced the Red Sea, God told him to trust Him and He would open up a way. With millions of Israelites following him, Moses did exactly what God told him.

What gave these characters their faith to act upon God's will? In Hebrews, it records that faith is trusting and hoping for things we cannot see. None of these people could see what they were promised. They had to believe that things would happen as God had planned.

We often try to evaluate our faith. Do we have great faith or just a little? But these examples teach us that faith really cannot be measured on a scale. Once God has chosen us, we need to come before Him wholeheartedly. Faith is believing He always keeps His promises and will never let us down.



## Bible Story

Last week, we learned how Moses sent some spies into Canaan. Does anyone remember how many spies Moses sent? That's right, he sent twelve spies who went throughout Canaan to see what the people and the land were like. Now two of the spies were very faithful. Do you remember their names? Yes, they were Caleb and Joshua. Why were they faithful? They saw how wonderful the land was, and they trusted that God would give it to the Israelites. But not all the spies gave a report like Caleb and Joshua's. What did the other ten spies have to say about Canaan? They said that the land was good and the fruit was very beautiful and large, but they were scared of the people. The ten spies said that the Israelites were like grasshoppers compared to the people in Canaan, and they did not really believe that God would help them. When the Israelites heard the report of the ten spies, they got so upset, they wanted to go back to Egypt—where they were slaves! God knew they weren't ready to go to Canaan yet, so He had the Israelites walk in the wilderness for another thirty-eight years. And after all those years, we come to this week's story.

### The Great City of Jericho

Finally, it was time for the Israelites to start moving into Canaan one more time, but to do that, they would have to battle a lot of people and cities. Do you think the Israelites were scared to go into battle with lots of people and cities? Well, most likely yes, but the Israelites also knew that they had an all-powerful God on their side, so they knew that God would take care of them. One of these people who had faith in God was Joshua. Remember him from last week? Well, even after thirty-eight years, he still had faith in God and knew that God would guide the Israelites as they entered Canaan.

Joshua knew that God's time for the Israelites to enter Canaan had finally come, so he secretly sent two spies to go into the land. Before they left, he told them, "Find out anything you can about Canaan, especially about the city of Jericho." So the two spies left their camp and made their way to Jericho. From far away, they could see what a great city it was. The city had these huge, thick walls that circled all

around. There were also houses that were built into the walls. Can you imagine in your head what these walls looked like? (You could ask a student to come up and draw on the board what they think the houses might look like on the walls. You may need to first draw two walls to help them visualize it.)

### Rahab Hides the Spies

Even though it was dangerous, the two spies snuck into the city of Jericho. They did what Joshua asked them to and took a good, long look at the land and the people. They tried to be very careful so that they wouldn't be caught. But after a long day, it was becoming dark. The two spies needed a place to stay. They decided to stay at a woman's house. Her name was Rahab. Remember those houses that were built right into the city walls? Well, Rahab lived in one of those houses, so she had a window that could take someone out of the city. It was a good idea for the spies to stay at Rahab's house because if the spies needed to leave the city quickly, they would be able to escape through the window.

But someone from the city saw these two spies going into Rahab's house and knew that they were probably Israelites trying to see what the city was like. When the king of Jericho found out about these two spies, he sent Rahab a message.

"Let us have those two men who are staying with you. They have come here to spy on us!"

But Rahab had already hidden the spies. She hid them under piles of flax that were on her rooftop. In those days, the rooftops were flat, not pointed. This made it easy for the spies to stay on the roof. Rahab put the flax on her roof so that it could dry. Flax comes from a plant used for making cloth. Rahab did all this to protect the spies!

She told the king's messengers, "The men were here, but I don't know where they came from. They left when it was time to close the city gate, just when the sun was going down. I don't know where they were going, but maybe you can catch them if you hurry."

After the king's messengers heard this, they went after the spies. As soon as they had gone, the city gate was closed.

### Rahab's Strong Faith

The two spies had almost been caught. But

once Rahab knew that the messengers were gone, she went up on the roof and said to the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you this land. Everyone in this city is shaking with fear because of you. We heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea so that you could leave Egypt, and how He had destroyed other people and kings. Look around—everyone in this city is scared because we know that the Lord your God rules in heaven and on earth. Please promise me in the Lord's name that you will be as kind to my family as I have been to you. Do something to show me that you will save me and my family later on."

### **The Spies Make a Promise to Rahab**

The spies replied, "If you save our lives, we will save yours! Don't tell anyone about what we are doing, and we promise to help you when the Lord gives us this land."

To get them out of her house and into safety, Rahab let the spies down by a rope through the window of her house. Remember, her house was in the city wall. So once she let them out, they would be outside the city of Jericho. Then it would be easy for them to go back to their camp.

Before the spies left, she said, "Hide in the hills! Otherwise, you may run into the king's messengers. They are trying to look for you, but they won't be able to find you in the hills. They will give up and

return after three days. After three days, you can go back to your camp."

Before the spies left, they told Rahab, "We will keep our promise to you. But this red rope must be tied on your window when we invade the land. Also your parents, your brothers, and everyone else in your family must be here with you. If anyone leaves the house, they may be killed, and we will not be able to save them. If you tell anybody why we were here, we won't have to keep our promise."

"I'll do exactly as you have said," Rahab promised, and she said good-bye. The spies climbed down the rope, and she made sure that the red rope stayed tied to her window.

### **The Spies Come Home Safe and Sound**

For three days, the spies hid in the hills while the king's men searched along every road for them. After the men had given up and gone back, the two spies left the hills and crossed the river. When they came back to Joshua, they told him everything that had happened with Rahab and the king's messengers. They also said, "We are sure the Lord has given us the whole country because the people shake with fear every time they think of us."

So Joshua knew and had faith that God's time had really come for the Israelites to go into Canaan. Joshua knew that God would help them win the battle against the great city of Jericho.



### **Check For Understanding**

- 1. How many spies did Joshua send? (Two.)**  
**What city did he send them to spy on?**  
(Jericho.)
- 2. Where did the spies hide when they were in the city of Jericho? (They hid at Rahab's house.)**
- 3. Where in the house did the spies hide?**  
(They hid on the rooftop, under piles of flax.)
- 4. What did Rahab ask the two spies for before they left her house? (She asked the**

spies to save her and her family when they would later attack and capture the city.)

- 5. How did Rahab help the spies leave the city? (She let them down through a window by a rope. But since her house was built into the city walls, they spies were able to get out of the city.)**
- 6. What did Rahab tell the spies to do to stay safe? (She told them to stay in the hills for three days so that the king's messengers would not be able to find them. Then it would be safe for them to return to the camp.)**



## Life Application Story

### God's Brave Helper

One day, a new girl joined Michelle's class in school. Her name was Erika, and even though she had a warm smile and a friendly face, Erika did not speak English as well as the other kids.

Mrs. Jones, the teacher, introduced Erika to the class and said, "Class, please welcome Erika. She will be with us from now on. Because Erika is just learning to speak English, it is our job to help her."

But when Mrs. Jones sat her next to Adrienne, Adrienne began to whine, "Mrs. Jones, I don't want to sit next to her."

"Why not, Adrienne?" Mrs. Jones asked.

"Because ... because ... because I don't want to," said Adrienne.

When Erika saw what was happening, tears started to well up in her eyes, but she swallowed hard and tried her best to keep her tears in.

Erika could tell that Mrs. Jones was about to say something to Adrienne, so she quickly said in her best English, "It's okay, maybe I sit there?" Erika pointed to an empty seat in the back that was next to a girl named Veronica.

Mrs. Jones thought for a moment and replied, "Well, that is fine, Erika. Veronica, please get Erika a book from the back so that Erika can follow along with us." And with that, Mrs. Jones turned her back and began to write on the board.

Usually, Veronica was very polite, but when she saw that Adrienne refused to sit with Erika, Veronica also did not want to help her. Before Erika even began to walk towards the back of the room, Veronica quickly put some books on the empty chair so that Erika could not sit there. Erika could no longer hold back her tears. She cried softly as she stood unhappily in the middle of the room, unsure of where to go.

Michelle saw what was happening and wanted to help. She raised her hand and asked the teacher, "Mrs. Jones, I know you said she could sit next to Veronica, but I have an empty seat next to me too. I would really like it if she could sit here." Michelle turned towards Erika and gave her a big smile.

Mrs. Jones said, "Of course, Michelle. How wonderful of you!"

As Michelle and Erika went to the back of the room to get a book, Michelle whispered to Erika, "I hope we can be friends. You seem like a really nice person."

Erika's eyes opened wide. "You want to be friend?" she asked.

"Sure, I do," replied Michelle. "Do you want to be mine?"

Erika was too happy for words and just nodded. When Michelle saw how happy Erika was, she thanked God in her heart for having the courage to be different from everyone else. Her heart had been pounding when she raised her hand to speak, but she knew it was the right thing to do.

Once the other boys and girls in the class got to know Erika and she also learned to speak more English, they all slowly became friends with her too. Even though Erika made many friends after that first day of school, she always feels an extra special bond with Michelle, who was the only one to have enough courage to be her first friend in a new place.

### Questions to Think About

1. **Did Erika feel welcomed at first?** (No, no one wanted to help her or be her friend.)
2. **Who was brave enough to be Erika's first friend?** (Michelle raised her hand and asked the teacher to let Erika sit next to her. She was glad God gave her the courage to do what was right.)
3. **How can you be a good, brave helper for God?** (Let students answer.)



## Activity 1

### Rahab Helps the Spies

Look at the pictures. Answer the questions and color

in the pictures. Rahab hid the spies on the \_\_\_\_\_ (roof). Rahab used a \_\_\_\_\_ (rope) to help the spies out of the city.



## Activity 2

### **The Path to Jericho**

Help the two spies reach the city of Jericho.



## Activity 3

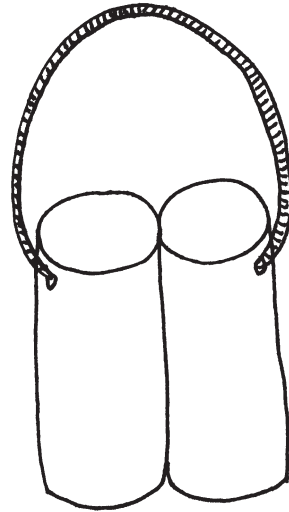
### **Spy-Noculars**

#### Materials:

1. toilet paper rolls (2 per student)
2. yarn
3. stickers and scrap papers
4. hole punch
5. scissors
6. tape or stapler

#### Directions:

1. Give each student two toilet paper rolls. Lay them side by side (the long way) and tape (or staple) the two rolls together. Now it should look like a pair of binoculars.
2. Help the students punch two holes, one on each roll, near one end of the binoculars.
3. String a piece of yarn (long enough for the students to hang the binoculars around their necks without hurting themselves) through the holes to create a loop and tie it off.
4. Allow the students to decorate their binoculars with stickers or scraps of paper.
5. As the students are creating this craft, have them answer the following questions:
  - \*How do you think the spies felt when they went into the city of Jericho?
  - \*Do you think Rahab was glad she helped the spies?
6. After the craft and if time permits, you may wish to ask the students to pretend to be the spies, entering the city of Jericho.

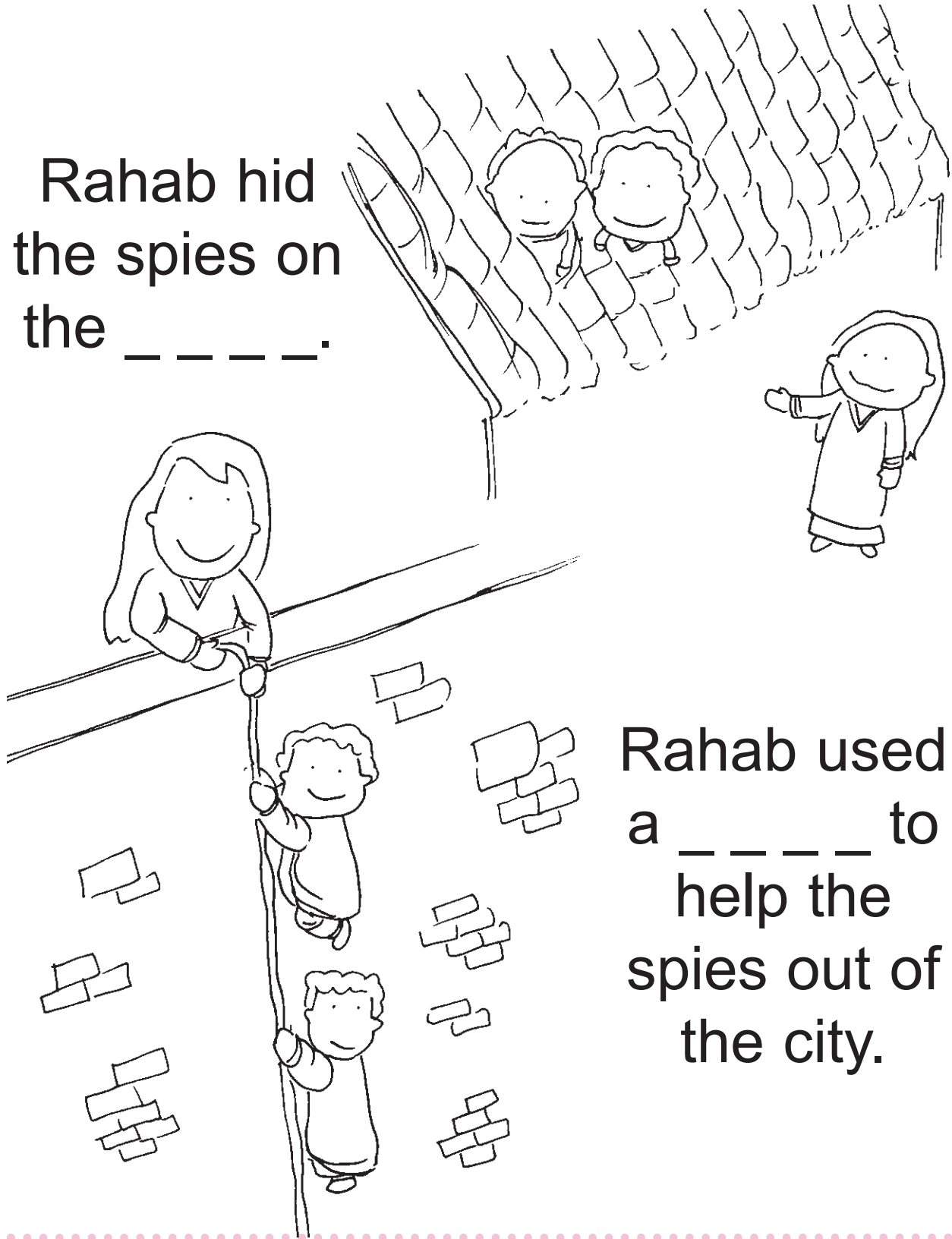


Activity 3:1

**Rahab Helps the Spies**

Look at the pictures. Answer the questions and color in the pictures.

Rahab hid  
the spies on  
the \_\_\_\_\_.



Rahab used  
a \_\_\_\_\_ to  
help the  
spies out of  
the city.

Activity 3:2

### The Path to Jericho

Help the two spies reach the city of Jericho.

