

LESSON 8

THE TWELVE SPIES

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Wandering in the Desert

Moses planned to go directly from Sinai to Canaan. On the border of the promised land, Moses sent spies to explore the land. However, because of the lack of faith in God and the ten spies' discouraging report, the people refused to go forward. Within sight of the promised land, the Israelites turned back.

For them, the opportunity never returned. According to God's words, they were condemned to wander for forty years until every one of the Israelites who left Egypt had died. Joshua and Caleb, the two faithful spies, were the only ones of that generation to see the promised land.

Courage and Encouragement

Our actions influence other people. If we have a positive attitude in our faith, we are an encouragement to others. If we have a negative attitude, we discourage others. The students' behavior inside and outside of class will influence others. The spies who gave the bad report were comparing the giants to themselves (grasshoppers) instead of to God. This brought fear to the Israelites and led them to rebel at the end. We must remember that things "which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Lk 18:27).

God doesn't expect us to do everything on our own either. We must rely on God and rely on our brethren. When the students start a new school year, do they sometimes lack the courage to make new friends? Do they feel like they are a "grasshopper" in the sight of others? Are they afraid to say grace during lunch? Take courage. God will help them.

God's Promise

God never breaks a promise. God promised to deliver the Israelites from bondage and promised to give them the land of Canaan. They witnessed numerous miracles and experienced the power of God since the time they were in Egypt.

But now, after reaching Canaan, a few frightening words from the faithless spies led the Israelites to completely forget about all the miracles the Lord had done for them. Fear and mourning eventually broke out and led to their great rebellion against the Lord. They even preferred death (Num 14:2).

Your students know of at least one promise from God: the Holy Spirit. They should be reminded that it is a promise from God and that He will give it to them if they ask.

BIBLE TEXT

Numbers 13:1–14:38

BIBLE TRUTH

Fear can paralyze us from doing what we ought to do.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To stand firm in the word of God, even though we may be standing alone.
2. To know that God will strengthen us and give us the courage to do what is right.
3. To trust God's word and promises.

MEMORY VERSE

"Stand fast in the faith."

(1 Corinthians 16:13)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, Lord, for bringing us here to worship Your holy name. Sometimes, it's hard to always follow Your commands, especially when everyone around us isn't. But we know that Your word is good, and it will bring us life. Please give us the strength to always follow Your word, Lord. Hallelujah! Amen.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Ask the students to imagine standing alone, possibly with one other person, while attempting to convince their whole school to do something. This is the kind of situation Caleb and Joshua faced when they returned from exploring Canaan. Although they faced hundreds of thousands of frightened and angry people, they had the courage to do what was right.

Your students are probably especially sensitive to ridicule or ostracism because they are different or choose to do different things. For example, they may be afraid to say grace before lunch for fear of being teased, or they may be ostracized because they go to church and can't go out to play on Saturdays. Help your students understand that there is nothing wrong with being different; in fact, God calls us to live lives differently from the people around

us. It is His will for us to separate ourselves "from the peoples of the land" (Ezra 10:11).

The courage of Caleb and Joshua lay in God's promise and His words. James states, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (Jas 1:12).

Joshua and Caleb understood that the Lord would give them victory if they continued to do what was right. As long as we continue to do what is right, we can trust God to do what is best for us. He knows how to deal with those who give us a hard time because of our love for Him, and He will—in His time and in His way. We can therefore continue to obey the commands of God with courage and faith.

VOCABULARY

- spy:** someone who secretly tries to find out information
- explore:** to find out new things about a certain place
- report:** to tell about what you saw, did, or heard

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about how the Israelites camped at Mount Sinai and how Moses went up to speak to the Lord. While Moses was on the mountain, the Israelites did something that greatly angered the Lord. Do you remember what it was? Right, they made a golden calf to worship!

The Lord was angry enough with them to destroy all of them. Why was He so angry? (The Lord is the one and only God and He wants us to worship Him only.) Because the Lord is the only God, what are we never to do? (We should never worship any other gods or even consider anything as more important than God in our hearts.)

When God told Moses that He wanted to destroy the Israelites, what did Moses do? (He pleaded with God for the Israelites and God did not destroy all of them.) God gave Moses some very important laws that He wrote on two flat stones. What were these laws called? (The Ten Commandments.) We still follow these commands today.

BIBLE STORY

Moses Sends Out Twelve Spies

After the Israelites had camped at Mount Sinai for some time, God guided them to the Desert of Paran. They were close enough to the promised land so the people could explore it. The promised land, the land with plenty of milk and honey, was called Canaan.

The Lord said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man from each tribe." So Moses did as the Lord said, and he sent twelve men, all leaders of the Israelites. Among the spies were Joshua and Caleb.

Moses told them, "Find out what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, and if there are many of them. Is the land good or bad? What

kinds of towns do they live in? Are they protected or not? How is the soil? Is it good or bad? Are there lots of trees? Try to bring back some of the fruit of the land."

The Spies Explore the Promised Land

So the spies went up and explored the land. When they came to a place called the Valley of Eschol, the spies cut off a branch that had a single cluster of grapes. Two men had to carry it on a pole between them. They also took some pomegranates and figs. That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites had cut from there ("Eshcol" means "cluster").

They explored the land for forty days and then returned to the camp.

A Bad Report

When the spies came back to the Israelite camp, they reported to all the people what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken. They gave Moses this report: "The land that you sent us to explore does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people there are powerful, and the cities are protected and very large. We even saw giants there, from the family of Anak! The Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, and the Canaanites all live there."

Caleb then quieted the people who were there before Moses and said, "We should go up and take the land, because we will surely be able to do it."

But the other spies said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are!" The spies began to tell the people, "The land we explored eats up those who live there. All the people we saw were so large; we even saw giants there, the children of Anak! We seemed like grasshoppers when we compared ourselves to them, and they must have thought the same."

The Israelites Cry Out Against Moses

That night, all the Israelites cried out loud and began complaining to Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us get killed there? Our wives and children will be taken away from us. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

They began to say to one another, "We should choose a leader to take us back to Egypt."

Joshua and Caleb Have Faith in God

Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies who had gone to explore the land, then said to all the Israelites, "The land we explored was very good. If the Lord is happy with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. But do not fight against the Lord, and do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will overtake them. They do not have anyone to protect them, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

But the Israelites talked about stoning them.

Moses Pleads for the Israelites

Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tabernacle of meeting to all the Israelites. The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people continue to look down upon Me? I have performed so many miracles among them, and yet they still do not believe in Me! I will bring down a plague and destroy them all. But you, Moses, I will make into a great nation, one that is stronger than they."

Moses said to the Lord, "Then the Egyptians will hear about it! You brought these people from Egypt by Your mighty power. If You destroy the Israelites, they will hear about it. They have already heard about You, O Lord. They know that You are with these people and guide them by day and by night. If You kill all of the Israelites, the other people who have heard about You will say, 'The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land He promised to them, so He killed them in the desert.' But You are a powerful and loving God; forgive these people like You have been doing since they left Egypt."

The Israelites Wander for Forty Years in the Desert

The Lord replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. But as surely as I live, not one of the men who left Egypt and saw the miracles I performed will be able to enter the promised land. They have tested Me ten times and have looked down upon Me. But Caleb is different from the others and follows Me with his whole heart. I will bring him into the promised land and his children will live there. Turn back tomorrow and head toward the Red Sea."

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "How long will these people complain against Me? I have heard their complaints, so tell them: 'I will do what you have said; every one of you who is twenty years or older and complained against Me will never enter the promised land. Only Joshua and Caleb will enter the land. I will bring your children, whom you said would be taken away from you, into the land to enjoy it. But for forty years—one year for every day you explored the land—you will suffer in this desert and will die here.'"

The spies who had given a bad report were struck by a plague and died before the Lord. Joshua and Caleb had not been struck by the plague, so they lived.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. The Israelites didn't want to go into the promised land, but Joshua and Caleb believed that God would give it to them. Joshua and Caleb believed in God. What do we call this kind of belief? Faith.
2. Do you think it was hard for Joshua and Caleb to stand up against the rest of the Israelites? It might have been hard, but they stood firm in what they believed.
3. Moses sent twenty spies to explore the land. False; he sent twelve spies.
4. Ten of the spies were sure that they could beat the enemy. False; only two thought they could beat the enemy.
5. Joshua and Caleb were not afraid because God was with them. True.
6. The Israelites would have to wander fifty years in the desert. False; they would have to wander for forty years.
7. God was angry because the Israelites did not believe that He would help them. True.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

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

“Stand fast in the faith.” (1 Corinthians 16:13)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. We need to rely on God to help us stand firm in this world and set ourselves apart from others, even in times when we find ourselves standing alone.

God doesn't like it when we do something wrong or sin against Him. Many people in this world don't believe in God and never feel the love of God. That's why they do all sorts of things on Sabbath. Have you ever had a friend invite you to a birthday party on Sabbath? Sabbath is a day set apart by God so that we may rest and worship Him. Maybe all of your friends are going and you're the only one who isn't. If we rely on God, we can stand firm and set ourselves apart. We must not break God's commandment.

We may also encounter people who lie all the time. You may know some friends who've lied to their parents, lied to their teachers, and even to their own friends. As Christians, we must not lie on purpose. This is also God's commandment. We may even have friends who say bad words, say mean things, and hurt others all the time. But we must separate ourselves from them because we are the children of God. Some people may think that knowing God and believing in Him has so many restrictions, because it seems like there are many things that Christians can't do. But we must learn from Paul and consider it a gain to know Christ. God can help us in times of need and we can always rely on Him. When we are sick, we can pray to Him. When we are sad or lonely or angry, God can comfort us. Other people in the world don't have God in their life to guide them, to comfort them, or to help them.

2. We must put our trust into God's words and promises.

Honoring our parents is one of the Ten Commandments. But did you know that commandment also comes with a promise? God says that if we honor our father and mother, we will live long in the land that God is giving us. God doesn't break His promises. If we do our part, God will certainly do His part.

God also promised us the precious Holy Spirit. If you haven't received the Holy Spirit, you must continue to ask God. It is a promise from God and God never breaks His promises. He will give it to you as long as you believe and continue to ask for it. We may find that our friends and even our family members around us may promise us something, but then they later break that promise. But we must remember that God will always keep a promise and will always stand with us even when we are alone.

Trusting in God, obeying God, and believing in His promises can bring blessings upon us, too. A couple in our church owned a restaurant. They loved their work and they loved God very much. A restaurant is usually open seven days a week, with Saturday and Sunday being the busiest days of the week. This means restaurants make the most money during the weekend. But this couple knew that Saturday was the Sabbath day and that they had to keep it. It is a commandment. So, even though they knew that they could make a lot of money on Saturday, they still closed the restaurant on Sabbath. God saw that they loved Him and obeyed Him, so God gave them double the amount of money when they reopened on Sunday after resting on Saturday. We must put our trust into God's words and promises.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. False; forty days | 6. Caleb |
| 2. True | 7. grasshoppers |
| 3. False; both Caleb and Joshua believed in God. | 8. milk, honey |
| 4. True | 9. twenty |
| 5. True | 10. Answers may vary. |

ACTIVITIES

1

Two Different Views

Objective: To remember what Joshua and Caleb said about the land of Canaan.

Instructions

1. Joshua and Caleb disagreed with the ten other spies about the land of Canaan. Work together as a class to find out why Joshua and Caleb disagreed; refer to Numbers 13:26-33 and Numbers 14:6-9.
2. On the board, create two columns. Label one column "Joshua and Caleb" and the other "The Ten Other Spies."
3. Ask the students to find things that Joshua, Caleb, or the ten other spies felt or said.
4. When the students find something that Joshua or Caleb felt or said, put a check in their column. Then, ask the students what they would say if they were Joshua or Caleb. Write their response below the check mark.
4. When the students find something that the other spies felt or said, write it down in their column. Then, ask the students what they would say in response to these ten spies. What would they say to encourage them? Write down their response below the check mark.

Words that the spies said:

- A. The Canaanites were very strong and lived in great walled cities.
- B. The Israelites would be able to overcome the Canaanites.
- C. The Israelites would be beaten by the giant-sized Canaanites.
- D. God could get the land of Canaan for the Israelites.
- E. Because the Lord was with the Israelites the Israelites should not be afraid of the Canaanites.

2

Exploring Canaan

Objectives: 1. To give students an interactive way of reenacting the spies' mission.
2. To help them learn to work as a team.

Preparations

1. Set up a scavenger hunt either inside or outside the classroom. Prepare two of each of the following items and create a checklist of the items. (You can use construction paper, images, or real ones.):

- Grapes
- Pomegranates
- Figs
- Milk jugs
- Honey jars

2. Hide each set of the items in different locations and create clues about where they are located. Put the clues on the same page as the checklist. You'll need two sets of clues for two teams.

Instructions

1. Divide the class into two teams.
2. Give each team the checklist and clues.
3. Send them on their way and supervise.
4. Wait for both teams to return.
5. Have each team report on what they found, where they found it, and if it was easy or hard to find.

3

"Exploring Canaan" Crossword

Objective: To help students focus on the trip into Canaan and the spies' report when they returned.

Refer to crossword activity page.

Answer Key

Across: 3. Joshua; 5. figs; 7 honey; 8. grapes; 9. Israelite
Down: 1. powerful; 2. Caleb; 6. stronger; 4. forty

Exploring Canaan

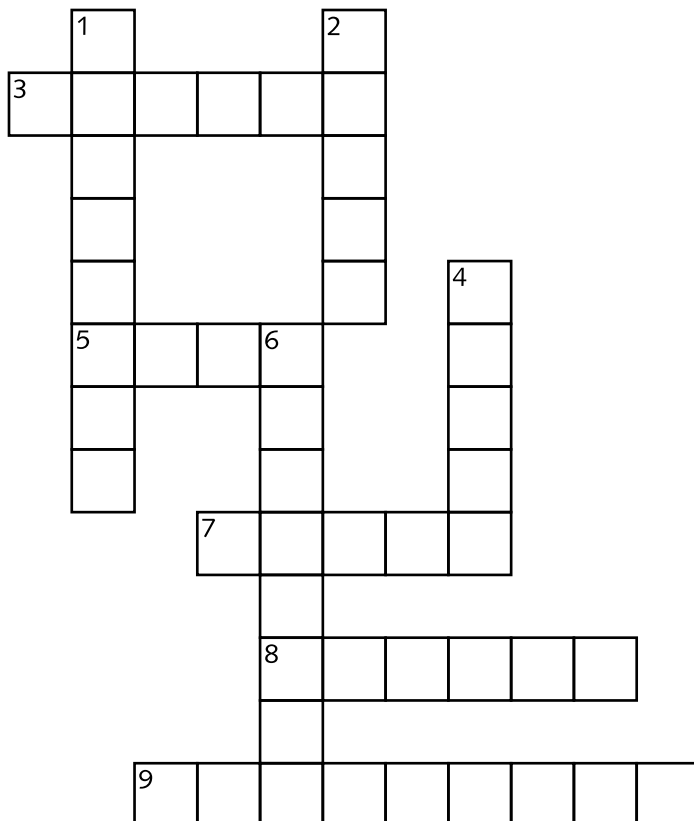
Instructions: Use your Bibles to help fill in the missing blanks to compete the crossword puzzle.

Across

- 3. In Num 14:5-9, _____ and Caleb tell the people that they should enter the land of Canaan because “the Lord is with us.”
- 5. The spies brought back pomegranates and _____. (Num 13:23)
- 7. The spies reported that the land of Canaan flowed with milk and _____. (Num 13:27)
- 8. They brought back a branch with a single cluster of _____. (Num 13:23)
- 9. When the spies came back they reported to the whole _____ community. (Num 13:26)

Down

- 1. They said that the people who lived in the land of Canaan were very _____. (Num 13:28)
- 2. _____ said that they should go in and take possession of the land. (Num 13:30)
- 6. Ten of the spies said “we can’t attack them...they are _____ than us.” (Num 13:31)
- 4. The 12 spies explored the land of Canaan for _____ days. (Num 13:25)



Word Bank

powerful
figs
Israelite
forty
Joshua
Caleb
grapes
stronger
honey

E1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 8—The Twelve Spies

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: Fear can paralyze us from doing what we ought to do.

Lesson Objectives:

1. To stand firm in the word of God, even though we may be standing alone.
2. To know that God will strengthen us and give us the courage to do what is right.
3. To trust God’s word and promises.

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.

(1 Corinthians 16:13)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

True or False

1. The spies were gone for four weeks. _____
2. The ten spies didn't believe that God would help the Israelites take the land. _____
3. Joshua was the only spy that believed God would help them. _____
4. The Israelites were afraid of the Canaanites. _____
5. God punished the Israelites for speaking against Him. _____

Fill In the Blank

twenty grasshoppers honey Caleb milk

6. Joshua and _____ returned with a good report and showed courage.
7. The other ten spies compared themselves to _____.
8. Canaan is a land flowing with _____ and _____.
9. Besides Caleb and Joshua, those who were _____ years or older and had complained against God would not be allowed to enter the promised land.

Life Application

10. Today, as children of God, we must be different from other people around us. How are we different? What are some things other people can do that we cannot do? Sometimes, we will be one of the few, or the only one, doing what is right. How can we ask God to help give us the courage to stand strong for what is right?
