

LESSON 11

THE TWELVE SPIES

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about the twelve spies who went into Canaan, and the Israelites' rebellion.
2. To learn not to sway in faith because of other peoples' opinions, or to sway other peoples' faith because of your own negative influence.
3. To learn from the examples of Joshua and Caleb to stand up for God and not to be influenced by others.

MEMORY VERSE

"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)

PRAYER

1. We thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship and learn more about His word.
2. Father, we want our lives to be pleasing to You. Help us to be strong. Give us a heart to follow You with all of our hearts.
3. Lord, please also help strengthen our faith and trust in Your words and promises.
4. Please give us the courage to do the right things and stand up for You.
5. May God help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. Twelve Spies Explore Canaan

- The Spies' Report
- Two Stand Apart

2. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—One True God

3. Life Application

- Be Careful of How I Think and Act
- Standing Against the Crowd

4. Activity—Being a Different Sheep



Background Knowledge for Teachers

The Land of Canaan

The promised land, also called the land of Canaan, was indeed magnificent, as the twelve spies had discovered. The Bible often calls it the "land flowing with milk and honey." Although the land was only 150 miles long and 60 miles wide, its lush hillsides were covered with fig, date, and nut trees. It was the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God told the Israelites that the promised land was rich and plentiful. When the spies returned to Kadesh from scouting the new land, the people had to decide whether to enter the land or to retreat. They chose to retreat and were condemned to wander for about forty years in the wilderness. Aaron and Miriam also died there.

Why Milk and Honey?

Milk comes from cows, goats, and sheep. Honey comes from bees, and the fruit of the bees' labors was considered a divine blessing. For cows, sheep, and goats to produce milk, they must have plenty of fresh green pasture. For bees to give honey, they need plenty of flowers, fruits, and vegetables to gather pollen from as they pollinate the plants. So, a land flowing with milk and honey would be a rich land, a land with plenty of fresh green vegetables, flowers, fruit, pasture, and everything in between.

How rich was this "land flowing with milk and honey" that the Lord gave to the children of Israel? Refer to 1 Kings 8:63.

Solomon offered up 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. Of course, those were not all the sheep and bulls that lived in the land that the Lord gave to His people. Imagine how many sheep and oxen there had to be.



Reaching Out to Your Students

At this age, your students are becoming less self-centered. They should be able to relate to and understand others' feelings and thoughts, and are beginning to develop social and reasoning skills as well as their own identity. They need to hear stories about having experiences with different persons. Share with them about how a person should be willing to stand for God. Be sure to tell about the motives and the outcome of God's guidance. You may want to explain what it means to be courageous by contrasting it with fearfulness. Also, remind your students what it means to stand for God by reviewing the Ten Commandments. Ask your students to share about how they or their friends are courageous. Elaborate on good examples and teach your students to model after those good examples. Compare their experiences with different Bible stories. Take this opportunity to show them how biblical teachings work in real life.

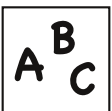


Opener

5 Minutes

Has anyone ever asked you to do something wrong or go along with something that you knew was wrong? If so, what was it? [List out the students' answer on the board.]

In today's lesson, we'll learn about what it means to stand up for what is right. And we'll also learn about people who went along with what was wrong.



Vocabulary

rebel: to resist or disobey the leader
influence: to affect other people's thinking or actions



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

Now in our next story, the Israelites had already left Mount Sinai. God once again sent a cloud ahead of the Israelites to lead them through the wilderness and towards the promised land of Canaan. However, along the way, the people complained to Moses and against God. What do you think are some things they might have complained about?

Well one of the things they complained about was not being able to eat meat! Remember, God had been giving them manna to eat every day in a wilderness that produced no food for them; God made sure that they were able to eat their fill every single day. But they still complained; they even wanted to go back to Egypt, where they had been slaves! God got very upset with them, but He still led them to Canaan. Still, when they got there, their complaints did not stop! Let's find out what happened.

Twelve Spies Explore Canaan

They had finally reached the promised land. It was now time for them to explore it, so they could see what it was

like and what kind of people lived in it. So, God ordered Moses to select a leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Do you remember any of the twelve tribes? [Let the students name as many as they can as you write them on the board.] Well, the Bible records each of the men who went to spy out the land. Let's turn to Numbers 13:3-15 and find all of the names. [As they read each name, write them next to their appropriate tribe.]

Tribe	Leader
Reuben	Shammua
Simeon	Shaphat
Judah	Caleb
Issachar	Igal
Ephraim	Hoshea (Joshua)
Benjamin	Palti
Zebulun	Gaddiel
Joseph (Manasseh)	Gaddi
Dan	Ammiel
Asher	Sethur
Naphtali	Nahbi
Gad	Geuel

Now, before they left, Moses gave the men instructions. Let's read what Moses told them to do in Numbers 13:17-20. So after receiving their instructions, the men did as they were told. They went into Canaan and explored what the land and the people living in it were like.

One of the places they explored was called the "Valley of Eshcol." Eshcol literally meant "cluster," because the valley grew such enormous clusters of fruit. Let's read how the Bible describes this part of Canaan in verse 23. The cluster of grapes that they cut down was so big that two men had to carry it between them on a pole! God had promised the Israelites such a fruitful and bountiful land! He was truly showing His love for His people.

So the twelve men spent forty days spying out the land, before they finally returned to Moses and the rest of the Israelites.

The Spies' Report

The spies described the land as one that "truly flows with milk and honey." This phrase was used to describe a plentiful land with abundantly fruitful pastures and good fields for the Israelites to grow their crops and feed their cattle in. Canaan was the best land for the Israelites, and God had already promised that He would give it to them. But what was the report that the spies gave? Let's read it in verses 32-33. The spies not only gave a bad report, but also went among the Israelites and exaggerated it, even calling the land itself evil, despite the fact that it was a land that God had deemed good for His people.

Do you remember who these spies were? They were leaders in the tribes! These men were supposed to be setting an example for the rest of the people, in their actions and in their faith. But here, they were only encouraging the people to complain against God. Unfortunately, the Israelites all believed them more than God's promises, so they rebelled by refusing to enter Canaan. Let's read their reaction in 14:1-4. The Israelites were so afraid as a result of the spies' report that they would rather return to being slaves than take the land that God had promised them. They even wanted to replace Moses as leader!

Two Stand Apart

Of the twelve spies, there were two who spoke differently. Let's read about them in Numbers 14:6-10. Their report was completely different from the other ten spies' report! Although the entire congregation believed that they would die in Canaan, Joshua and Caleb stood firm in their belief that God would fulfill His promise. They weren't led astray by the sight of the Canaanites, the other spies, the community's rebellion, or even by the threat to their lives.

Let's compare the two different reports.

FOR TEACHERS

Go through the Bible Discovery worksheet with the students. Refer to the Teacher Version, located below the Homework Answer Key, for answers.

Have you ever heard of the term "standing against the crowd"?

To stand against the crowd means not to follow the actions or opinions of those around us. It means to stand separately in thought and opinion from other people.

Have you ever been in a situation where many of your friends or classmates do something because it is cool, or because everyone else is doing it? For example, your friends make fun of the teacher because everyone else does it. But we know that Jesus loves those who care for those around them. If you speak up against this bullying, or if you refuse to participate, that means you are showing Christian qualities and standing against the crowd.

Caleb and Joshua stood against the crowd by not following the beliefs of the thousands of people around them. They were not led astray in their faith, and they demonstrated their firm belief in God's power. As believers in Christ, we may often need to stand against the crowd. It could happen in any situation, such as refusing to cheat on a test with all of your friends or caring for a disliked neighbor. What are some ways we might have to stand against the crowd?

The Israelites Are Punished

Now, you might wonder what happened to the Israelites who rebelled against God and refused to step into Canaan. Well, God was so angry at their disbelief that, at first, He wanted to destroy them all! After all, this was hardly the first time they had refused to believe in His great power. But the Israelites were saved because Moses interceded for them. Let's read what he said in Numbers 14:13-19. He told God that if He killed His people, then the Egyptians whom they had escaped would hear about it and mock the Lord, saying that He wasn't powerful enough to fulfill His promise. So, God listened and pardoned the Israelites.

However, although God pardoned them, that didn't mean they were to go unpunished for their rebellion. Let's read His decision in verses 26-38. God decided that the Israelites who rebelled against Him would not enter Canaan! Instead, they would wander the wilderness for another forty years, and only their children would be able to enter. The only men who would ever see the promised land would be Caleb and Joshua, because they had believed in Him.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True God

The Israelites failed to recognize that God is the only God capable of all things. They had nothing to fear because God had promised them the land of Canaan. The Israelites witnessed God's power on a daily basis—He provided them with manna to eat every day, and led them with a pillar of cloud and fire. Yet, despite witnessing such wonders, they all trembled with fear when they heard the report on the strength of the Canaanites.

Today, we need to keep God's power in mind as well. God is on our side and nothing is impossible for Him. If we truly need His help, God will be with us.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

After all the time spent in the wilderness, the Israelites came to the edge of the beautiful land God had promised them. They didn't know anything about the land they were going to enter. What kinds of things did they want to know before they entered the land? (What were the people there like? Would there be good places to live and enough food and water?)

- 1. What report did Joshua and Caleb give?** They reported that the land was a wonderful place and good for growing crops; that the people were big and strong; and that God would help the Israelites take over the land.
- 2. What report did the other ten spies give the Israelites?** The other spies reported that the land was good, but that the people were big and mean; if the Israelites tried to take over the land, the Canaanites would kill them.
- 3. What was similar in the two reports?** They all agreed that the land was good and that the people there were strong.
- 4. What was different about the two reports?** Joshua and Caleb saw God's will and power, whereas the other spies only saw the fortified cities and the strength of the Canaanites.
- 5. What did the Israelites do after hearing the two reports?** They became afraid and forgot God's promise. They stopped trusting in God. They even tried to kill Caleb and Joshua.
- 6. Did Joshua and Caleb change their report after seeing the Israelites' reaction?** No. They remained firm in their faith.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Be Careful of How I Think and Act

Objective: To learn that we should not negatively influence others.

When the spies returned from Canaan, it was they who made the Israelites rebel. By spreading bad words about God's promised land, they negatively influenced the Israelites so that, in the end, they refused to enter Canaan. If we aren't careful, we might also negatively influence our friends or our family.

Read each scenario below, and then on the right side of the table, explain what Michael should have done instead. [Allow the students time to finish the table, and then go over their answers. The suggested answers have been listed below.]

1. One afternoon, during lunch at church, Michael told his two friends Greg and Steve that he wanted to go and buy some snacks at a store nearby. Greg said that they didn't have much time before RE class started, and that they wouldn't get back in time. But Michael said that they would be quick, and persuaded them to go. However, at the store, they took a while trying to decide what they wanted, so by the time they got back to church, RE class had already begun.

What he should have done: He should have waited until after class to go to the store with his friends. If he had simply waited until after class, he could have taken his time in the shop, and would not have had to force his friends to get in trouble along with him.

2. Michael just got a new handheld game console for his birthday. He wanted to bring it to church next Sabbath day, so he went online and told his friend Kevin to bring his as well. Kevin reminded Michael that their RE teacher didn't want them to bring games to church, but Michael insisted, saying that they could play it somewhere where no one would see. It would be fun! So, on Sabbath day, Michael led Kevin and both of them snuck out during the prayer session in the morning to play games.

What he should have done: He should have invited Kevin to play with him on a different day, not the Sabbath. Perhaps if Michael had hung out with Kevin on another day, they would have been able to spend a lot more time playing games.

3. Before dinner, Michael wanted to eat some cookies, but his mother told him that he would ruin his dinner. She had them stored on a high cabinet, out of his reach, so Michael decided to ask his younger brother to help him. His brother didn't want to help, because he was afraid of getting in trouble, but Michael told him that they wouldn't get caught. So when their mother was away from the kitchen, they helped each other climb onto the kitchen counter to get the cookies.

What he should have done: Michael should have waited until after dinner to eat his cookie, or asked his mother if he could have half a cookie.

2. Stand Against the Crowd

Objective: To learn ways to stand against the crowd.

[Using the scenarios and the verses, help the students understand that God's standards are different from the standards of the world, and that it takes courage to follow God's will rather than the actions of their peers.]

Read the following scenarios, and then write what you think they should do in each situation.

1. Jack is walking back from school when he sees a familiar sight. "Stupid loser! Loner!" Some kids are yelling various insults at someone. It is Derik again. He walks with his head ducked, staring at the ground as he tries to get into his house as quickly as possible. Jack knows that these kids bully Derik because he only lives with his mom and he gets poor grades in school. Jack has often seen Derik with his face pressed against his window, watching the neighborhood children play together outside.

What should Jack do?

Jack suddenly remembers a lesson from RE class about how Jesus said that we should love our neighbors as ourselves. He makes up his mind. The next day after school, he rings the doorbell and offers his mother's homemade cookies to a surprised Derik. He then invites him over to play at his house with him and his little brother. Initially, the other children make fun of Jack, too, but then they eventually realize that Derik is actually very much like them. After some time, with Jack's encouragement, the other kids stop their bullying and begin to play with Derik.

2. "Hey, pst!" Brian looks over and takes the paper that his classmate slides over to him. He opens it. On the paper is a drawing of a very round, fat woman with silly eyes, and her tongue is sticking out. He knows immediately that it is supposed to be their teacher, whom they often make fun of because of her weight.

What should Brian do?

Brian had always been taught in RE that he should respect his teachers. He shakes his head at his classmate, crumples up the paper, and shoves it into his desk so that no one else can see it. He will throw it in the trash can later. He determines never to pass on notes such as this one. Realizing that Brian never passes on any of their notes, his classmates soon stop drawing them, and eventually, they stop making fun of the teacher altogether. Brian smiles with pride, knowing that he has done something that has made Jesus very happy with him.

3. "Hey Callie, let's go play tetherball!" Callie's friend Jenny begins to pull her to the ball when suddenly Callie sees their new classmate Lilah standing in the corner. "Should we ask Lilah if she wants to play?" Callie suggests, but Jenny gives her a scornful look. "No way, look at the way she dresses! Those must be like, her mom's old clothes!! She should at least look nicer if she wants to play with us."

What should Callie do?

Callie remembers her mom telling her that Jesus accepted everyone—whether young or old, sick or healthy, rich or poor. Surely that also meant kids who dressed differently? Callie stops walking and scolds her friend. "You shouldn't say that, Jenny. Maybe her family can't afford expensive things. What if I showed up in bad clothes tomorrow? Would you stop being friends with me?" Jenny mumbles some sort of reply, but agrees that they can invite Lilah to play with them. Soon, Jenny forgets all about her original protests when they discover that Lilah is eager to play and actually really fun to be around.

Below are verses that teach us how we should act in our daily lives. Look them up in the Bible and fill in the blanks.

Romans 12:2

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

1 Peter 2:9

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."



Activity

Being a Different Sheep

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To learn to stand against the crowd and stand apart as Christians.

Materials

- White and black construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Printer paper
- Markers
- Poster board if you cannot stick things to the wall

Instructions

1. Have the students draw several sheep, and then cut them out.
2. Have the students draw large speech bubbles, and then cut them out (at least one speech bubble per sheep).
3. Let each student pick one sheep to represent themselves.
4. In the speech bubbles, have the students draw or write things that their peers may pressure them to do. Below are some examples (you can also use the examples given in the discussion question in the Bible Discovery section):
 - a. "Do drugs"
 - b. "Cheat on a test"
 - c. "Bully a classmate"
 - d. "Make fun of the teacher"
5. Group the remaining sheep together and tape them to the wall or poster board. Then, above their heads, tape the speech bubbles that the students wrote or drew on.
6. On the remaining speech bubbles, write or draw Christian qualities that the students believe they need to work on, such as "love your neighbor," "pray before eating," or perhaps a picture of a child reading the Bible.
7. Tape the "student sheep" a slight distance from the "other" sheep, and tape the students' speech bubbles above them.
8. If you have time, then you can draw or cut out the words "Standing Apart as Christians" to serve as a banner above the scene.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. leaders
2. Eshcol, grapes
3. grasshoppers
4. They reported that the land was a wonderful place and good for growing crops; that the people were big and strong; and that God would help the Israelites take over the land.
5. The other spies reported that the land was good, but that the people were big and mean; if the Israelites tried to take over the land, the Canaanites would kill them.
6. They became afraid and forgot God's promise. They stopped trusting in God. They even tried to kill Caleb and Joshua.
7. No. They remained firm in their faith.

BIBLE DISCOVERY WORKSHEET (TEACHER VERSION)**TWO REPORTS!**

Refer to the verses and fill in the blanks.

1. Numbers 13:27-29, 31-33

"Then they told him, and said: 'We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. [...] We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.' And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.'"

2. Numbers 14:6-9

"But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: 'The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, "a land which flows with milk and honey." Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.'"

Compare the two reports in the table below. Consider what each group focused on.

THE OTHER SPIES' REPORT	JOSHUA AND CALEB'S REPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that the land was good • Saw only the fortified cities • Forgot God's promise • Compared their own strength to the Canaanites • Called God's gift evil • Didn't realize that God was with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that the land was good • Saw only God's good will • Believed in God's promise • Believed that God's power would give them victory • Feared God • Had confidence that God was with them

TWO REPORTS!

Refer to the verses and fill in the blanks.

1. Numbers 13:27-29, 31-33

"Then they told him, and said: 'We went to the _____ where you sent us. It truly flows with _____ and _____, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are _____; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of _____ there. [...] We are not able to go up against the people, for they are _____ than we.' And they gave the children of Israel a _____ of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that _____ its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like _____ in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.'"

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"But _____ the son of Nun and _____ the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: 'The land we passed through to spy out is an _____ land. If the Lord _____ in us, then He will _____ us into this land and give it to us, "a land which flows with milk and honey." Only do not _____ against the Lord, nor _____ the people of the land, for they are our bread; their _____ has departed from them, and the Lord is _____. Do not fear them.'"

Finish summarizing the two reports in the table below. Try to compare what each group focused on.

THE OTHER SPIES' REPORT	JOSHUA AND CALEB'S REPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that the land was good • Saw only the fortified cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that the land was good • Saw only God's good will



Be Careful of How I Think and Act

Objective: To learn that we should not negatively influence others.

When the spies returned from Canaan, it was they who made the Israelites rebel. By spreading bad words about God's promised land, they negatively influenced the Israelites so that, in the end, they refused to enter Canaan. If we aren't careful, we might also negatively influence our friends or our family.

Read each scenario below, and then on the right side of the table, explain what Michael should have done instead.

What Michael did	What Michael should have done
<p>One afternoon, during lunch at church, Michael told his two friends Greg and Steve that he wanted to go and buy some snacks at a store nearby. Greg said that they didn't have much time before RE class started, and that they wouldn't get back in time. But Michael said that they would be quick, and persuaded them to go. However, at the store, they took a while trying to decide what they wanted, so by the time they got back to church, RE class had already begun.</p>	
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<p>Before dinner, Michael wanted to eat some cookies, but his mother told him that he would ruin his dinner. She had them stored on a high cabinet, out of his reach, so Michael decided to ask his younger brother to help him. His brother didn't want to help, because he was afraid of getting in trouble, but Michael told him that they wouldn't get caught. So when their mother was away from the kitchen, they helped each other climb onto the kitchen counter to get the cookies.</p>	



Stand Against the Crowd

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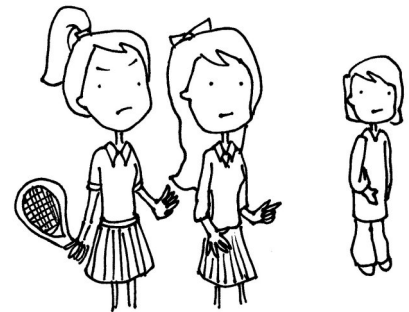
What should Jack do?

2. "Hey, pst!" Brian looks over and takes the paper that his classmate slides over to him. He opens it. On the paper is a drawing of a very round, fat woman with silly eyes, and her tongue is sticking out. He knows immediately that it is supposed to be their teacher, whom they often make fun of because of her weight.



What should Brian do?

3. "Hey Callie, let's go play tetherball!" Callie's friend Jenny begins to pull her to the ball when suddenly Callie sees their new classmate Lilah standing in the corner. "Should we ask Lilah if she wants to play?" Callie suggests, but Jenny gives her a scornful look. "No way, look at the way she dresses! Those must be like, her mom's old clothes!! She should at least look nicer if she wants to play with us."



What should Callie do?

Below are verses that teach us how we should act in our daily lives. Look them up in the Bible and fill in the blanks.

Romans 12:2

"And do not be _____ to this _____, but be _____ by the _____ of your mind, that you may _____ what is that _____ and _____ and _____ will of God."

1 Peter 2:9

"But you are a _____ generation, a royal _____, a _____ nation, His own special people, that you may _____ the _____ of Him who called you out of _____ into His marvelous _____."

E2 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 11—The Twelve Spies

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

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

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

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Joshua 1:9)**

Fill In the Blank

1. Moses selected _____ from each of the twelve tribes of Israel to spy out the promised land.
2. In the Valley of _____, the spies cut down a cluster of _____ that was so large, they needed two men to carry it.
3. The other spies reported that they appeared to be _____ compared to the Canaanites.

Short Answer

4. What report did Joshua and Caleb give?

5. What report did the other ten spies give the Israelites?

6. What did the Israelites do after hearing the two reports?

7. Did Joshua and Caleb change their report after seeing the Israelites' reactions?