

GO FORWARD WITHOUT FEAR

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

BELIEVE TRUST OBEY COURAGE BE WITH

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Numbers 13:1 – 14:42

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students learn what it means to trust God and obey him, and believe that he will give them the courage to do whatever he asks them to do.

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9b, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Children have many fears. They often fear animals, darkness, unknown people and new experiences. According to their personality, children express their fears in different ways: screaming, crying, clinging to the adult or acting with reluctance. One of my little friends never tells me exactly, “I’m scared when I’m away from home.” But he constantly asks me, “Are we far from the ice cream shop? What are we going to do now? How far is my house?”

This lesson will show the child that sometimes, even adults feel fear. But, trusting God makes the difference between being brave or fearful. People who trust in God believe in his goodness and love for them. They believe that he is greater than everything and everyone. They confidently trust that he will help them do whatever they are asked to do.

This level of trust is not built in one day. But, the lessons of this unit are important bricks for the construction of those truths in children. It is not that God only tells us to trust him, but through the Scriptures he shows us who he is, what he is like, how he keeps his promises, and how he has previously helped people. Be sure to share with your students how God came into your life. Your testimony, along with the Scriptures, is another brick to build the faith of children.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The story of the rebelliousness of the Israelites in Kadesh-barnea illustrates the truth that's mentioned in Hebrews 11:6: "without faith it is impossible to please God." God faithfully led his people away from slavery, established a covenant with them, and miraculously provided sustenance for their needs. And the time had come to enter the promised land: Canaan. But because of their unbelief and rebellion, that generation of Israelites lost their inheritance in one of the worst disasters the bible tells about.

This incident happened about 14 or 15 months after the Israelites left Egypt. Moses sent 12 leaders on a spy mission to discover what opportunities and challenges Canaan presented. It took the spies 40 days to travel back and forth through the distance between the desert and Canaan, which was about 402 km. When they returned, they admitted that it was a good land, which was evidenced by the fruits they brought.

However, we can discover the first clue to this problem in 13:27 when the spies say, "We went to the land to which you sent us ...". Prior to this, Canaan was constantly referred to as a precious gift from God (see v. 13:2). The spies' phrase in v. 27 reveals their negative feelings towards that land.

The spies' problem was that they focused on the negative. Many of the Canaanites were known for their exceptional size and strength. And Hebron was a very well fortified city. However, God repeatedly promised his people that he would give them the land of Canaan.

Joshua and Caleb did their part by focusing the people's attention on the promises of God (13:30 and 14:6-9). However, the unbelieving spies only became more rebellious and gave a "bad" report. That word means that their comments were not only negative, but also exaggerated and false. Their terrible speech produced sudden fear. The Israelites demanded to return to Egypt and threatened to kill Moses, Caleb and Joshua. The sad irony of this story is that what the Israelites predicted would happen to their children if they went to Canaan was what really happened to them because they did not believe in God's power.

Finally, God forgave his people and kept his covenant with them. However, he left them to face the consequences of their actions. Those consequences affected both the innocent and the guilty. Joshua and Caleb, being righteous men, had to suffer the privations of living in the desert for another 40 years instead of enduring only a few weeks. But, finally, only the children of the murmuring Israelites could enter.

God expects his people to trust him. As he did with the Israelites, he offers us enough evidence of his love, strength and ability to develop our faith. However, in the end, the choice is always ours. We can decide to trust in God, taking into account our previous experiences with him, or to doubt and rebel. Trusting is difficult. But as history shows us extensively, not trusting is even worse.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What are you afraid of?

Before this session, place a tablecloth or plastic wrap on the table. In the room, give each child dough or play dough (see recipes in the helps for teachers). Ask them to make a figure that represents an object or situation in which they are afraid. Let them show you what they made and explain their creation. Ask: "What do children do when they are scared?"

All people feel afraid sometimes. Sometimes, feeling fear is good. It helps us protect ourselves from danger. But other times, it prevents people from doing what God wants them to do. In our story today, people were afraid. Let's see what they did.

TEACH THE LESSON

Do not worry

This is a simple story to illustrate. Look for figures of biblical characters in the students' resources, make photocopies of Moses, Aaron, a crowd, color them and stick them on a background of bunches of grapes. While telling the story, stick the figures to the background with flannel or tape. Children can also make a large mural with vineyards, grapes, and fruit trees. Then they can attach the figures of the spies on it.

"Moses," God told him one day, "send some men to Canaan to explore the land I will give you." Moses called 12 leaders, "Go to Canaan," Moses said. "Explore the land and discover if it is good or bad. See what the cities are like and if the land is good for growing food. Bring back some of the fruit that grows in Canaan."

The 12 men went to Canaan immediately. For 40 days they explored the whole land. There they saw dry and desert places, fields of mature grains, and fast-flowing rivers. A lot of good fruit grew there. The spies took figs and pomegranates, and cut a huge bunch of grapes. It was so big that they had to carry it between two men. Forty days later they returned to report to Moses.

When they arrived, they showed Moses, Aaron and all the people the fruit they had brought. Then, 10 of the spies began to say, "Canaan is a good land. Look at the beautiful fruit! However, the inhabitants of Canaan are very large and strong. They live in cities with thick strong walls.

"We should not worry about that," said Caleb, another of the spies. "I think we could go now and take the land. We can do it!" "Do not!" the others shouted. "We cannot attack those people because they are not just big, they're giants! They're going to smash us like locusts!"

The Israelites were beginning to get upset. "Oh why did we come here?" they lamented. "God will let them kill all of us. Enemies will take our wives and children captive. We should go back to Egypt. Let's choose a new leader to take us back." Moses and Aaron fell to their knees with their faces on the ground. The people were dishonoring God by saying so many bad things about him. What would God do? Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes to show how disgusted they were.

"Do not talk like that!" shouted Joshua and Caleb. "The earth is good and we must trust in God. Do not frighten the people. God is with us. We can take the land!"

But, the people did not want to listen to them. They were so scared and angry that they even wanted to kill Moses, Joshua and Caleb.

Suddenly, God appeared to them as a bright cloud of light! He was also angry. "Until when will these people continue without trusting in me?" God asked Moses. "I will destroy them and start a new nation with your family." "No God, please, do not do that!" Moses begged. "You brought us from Egypt and everyone in Canaan knows that. You are kind and forgiving. Please forgive these people even though they have done such great harm!"

"I will forgive them, but I will not let any of them enter Canaan. They saw all the miracles that I did in their midst, but they did not trust me or obey me." Tell this message to the people: "They will live in the desert for another 40 years. This represents one year for each day that the spies explored the land. Everyone who is 20 years old or older will die, except Joshua and Caleb, who trusted me. Your children will one day live in Canaan, but you will not."

When Moses told the people what God had told him, they were very sad. "We have sinned," they said. "Therefore, now we will go to the land that God promised us." "Do not do that!" said Moses. "It is too late for you to go to Canaan."

The 10 spies who did not trust God died soon after. Only Joshua and Caleb lived. And they had to wait 40 long years. But they knew that God would keep his promise and take them one day to the land of Canaan.

Tell the children: "Joshua and Caleb believed in the promise that God would give them a new home. They trusted God and wanted to obey Him. God wants us to trust him and obey him. We should not be afraid to do what God wants us to do."

CONNECT THE LESSON

A maze of feet

Give the children Student Activity Sheet #232-A. While doing the maze, they can repeat the Bible memory verse. Ask review questions about the spies' trip, the attitude of the Israelites, God's punishment, etc.

Word search

Ask the children to work on the Word Search from Student Activity Sheet #232-B and then complete the sentences with the words: "trust", "obey", "God", "me" and "courage".

These two activities will give you the opportunity to review the lesson with appropriate questions prepared by you in advance. Have the students take their activities home to share with their families and friends.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Sort the verse

After repeating the memory verse several times to memorize it, write it on the board in a disorderly way. Then, ask the children to go to the board and write the text in the right order. Give the opportunity for all children to participate by writing the text. Those who do not know it can repeat it with the help of children who have already learned it.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Ask the children to mention reasons for thanking God and prayer requests. Pray for those requests. Ask the Lord to help the little ones learn to trust him and obey him as Joshua and Caleb did.

Encourage

In the group, sing 2 or 3 choruses that talk about being afraid and trusting in God. Say: "Trusting and obeying God is not always easy. But God will help us, just as he helped Joshua and Caleb."

Invite

Before departing be sure to encourage them to attend the next session. Encourage them to come with friends.