

GO FORWARD WITH GOD'S PROMISES

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

GROW TRUST PROMISE WORK

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Joshua 14:6-15

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students understand that God keeps his promises and often works through his people to do that. May their trust in God grow at the same time in his promises.

MEMORY VERSE

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

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Waiting is difficult for most elementary children, in part because for them time passes very slowly. I can remember those days when it seemed to me that three years had passed between December 1 and Christmas Day. Reaching second grade seemed like an impossible dream to achieve.

Not only does time go by slowly for children, but for most children of this age, time has little or no value. Once I showed the students in my group a Bible that someone had given me when I was a child. I asked them, "How old do you think this Bible is?" The first quick response they gave me was, "One hundred!"

In today's story, use this children's characteristic to emphasize the lesson: Caleb had to wait a long time to receive what God had promised him. Most of the parents of the children in your group have not yet reached the age of 45. Today you will see that Caleb had to wait, wait, and wait; but God fulfilled his promise, as he always does. We will not always have to wait for such a long time to receive what God promised us. Sometimes the waiting time will be shorter; at other times we'll have to wait longer. But the children of your group will begin to trust that God always keeps the promises of those who boldly trust him and obey him.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Joshua 14:6-15. Would you like to have a name whose meaning is “dog”? Probably not. Either way, that’s the meaning of our hero’s name in our Bible story. But regardless of whether the parents knew it or not, they had chosen a name that was very appropriate for their son, Caleb. Many dogs are known for their devotion and loyalty to their masters, and those qualities characterized Caleb’s relationship with God. This story reminds us that his faithfulness was rewarded by One who is known throughout the Bible as the “faithful God” (Deut. 7:9).

The Israelites were dividing the land of Canaan west of the Jordan. Two and a half tribes had taken the plots east of the Jordan. Now the remaining nine and a half were receiving what belonged to them. During this process, Caleb stepped forward to remind Joshua of the promise God had made to him through Moses (verse 9). Forty-five years ago, during the spy mission to Canaan, Caleb had faithfully given a favorable report about the land. But, although he (and Joshua) urged the people to obey God and enter, they had refused. All adults over 20 years of age perished in the desert during the next 40 years. But through Moses, God had promised: “Except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the Lord wholeheartedly” (Deut. 1:36).

We find two ironies in this passage. The first is that Caleb was not an Israelite, but a “Kenizzite” - a grandson of Kenaz - who in turn was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:10-11). Caleb had been adopted into the tribe of Judah and represented Judah when the spies were sent by Moses. But, his loyalty to God had exceeded that of most of the other (natural) Israelites.

The second has to do with the request that Caleb made to Joshua. He asked for what represented the great challenge that had scared the Israelites 45 years ago. Essentially, Caleb was declaring: “Give me those walled cities full of giants (the Anakites), because with the help of God I will drive them out!” (V. 12). Joshua recognized the rectitude of Caleb’s claim and granted his request. Some scholars believe that Joshua’s blessing gave Caleb the spiritual strength he needed to carry out the task of subduing Hebron.

This passage leads us to the following reflections:

1. What we “are” is not as important as what we “will become” by the grace of God. Caleb, the “dog” (a term that the Israelites ironically applied to non-Israelites), had once been excluded from the promises of God. And he became the first example of what an Israeli “dog” could be: faithful, loyal and courageous.
2. Choice - and not the place where one is born or the environment - determines whether or not someone belongs to the people of God. He chooses us through his anticipated grace.
3. We can count on God being faithful, but we must know how to wait for the right time. Caleb waited 45 years to obtain the land that God had promised him. For some situations, the reward for our fidelity may not even come during our life. However, it will come. Our God has promised!

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Promises kept

Before the session, prepare a variety of “unappetizing” ingredients: a cup of sand, a heap of stones, a jar of insects, a glass of dirty water, and so on. On the other hand, prepare a delicious snack: cheese cut into cubes, salty crackers, slices of sausages, fruit cubes, potato chips, and whatever you can include. Some drink, glasses and napkins.

In your group, say: “Today I prepared a tasty snack for you. I promise you that you’ll like it very much. Put out the “unappetizing” snacks you prepared one by one. As you put them out, ask: “Do you like them? Why not? But I promised you I would give you a nice snack.” Allow the children to express their displeasure. Now put out the real snacks. Ask them: “Do you like this snack more?” Share the tasty food and allow the children to eat. While doing so, ask them the following:

How did you feel when I offered you sand, rocks, insects and dirty water as a snack?

Why were they disappointing or disliked? (Because you had promised them a tasty snack, but offered them something yucky.)

Is it important to do what we promise?

How do you feel when someone does what she promised you?

How do you feel when someone does not do what he promised you?

Comment: “Someone made an important promise to Caleb, the man of our Bible story today. Let’s see if that person fulfilled his promise.”

TEACH THE LESSON

Go ahead

Read Joshua 14:6-15. After the Israelites defeated the city of Jericho, they continued into the land that God had promised them. Joshua led the people in many battles against the Canaanites. God helped them overcome their enemies and take the land for themselves. Finally, after many battles, the Israelites conquered most of Canaan. Now it was time to divide the land among the tribes of the people of Israel. God had told Moses how to do it. Now Joshua had that job.

One day, Caleb came to Joshua and said, "Joshua, do you remember when, many years ago, you and I were part of the 12 spies that Moses sent to explore the new land?" "I remember it very well," Joshua replied. "Well," Caleb continued, "I was 40 years old at the time. When I returned from that trip I told the people that we should obey God and enter the land." "Yes," Joshua said, "and I agreed with everything you said. You told Moses that the land was good, and that God would help us overcome the people who lived there. You begged us to trust in God and obey Him." "That's right," said Caleb. "But do you remember what happened next? The other spies gave such a bad report that the people were afraid to follow God." "Yes, I remember it very well," said Joshua. "That was the reason why we lost 40 long years in the desert!"

Caleb continued, "But I obeyed God with all my heart. Therefore, God spoke to Moses and he made a promise to me. He promised me that I would not die in the desert. He said that when the new land was ours, I would receive part of the land that I walked on, as my property." "It is true," Joshua agreed thoughtfully. "The Lord has kept the promise that he made to me 45 years ago when we were wandering in the desert," Caleb said. "Now I'm 85 years old. But I feel stronger than ever. And I'm ready to fight for the land that God promised to give me. If you give me this mountain that God promised me, I will go and conquer the people who live there. And God will help me!"

Joshua replied, "I'm happy to give you the city of Hebron, which is part of the land promised by God. You have been faithful to obey him. And, now I give you the blessing of God." Caleb did not waste time. He went to Hebron and defeated the enemies that dwelt in that place. From then on, Hebron belonged to Caleb and his family. God fulfilled the promise he had made to Caleb because he had trusted and faithfully obeyed the Lord.

After the story, emphasize how long Caleb had waited for God to keep his promise. Tell them: "45 years have passed since God made the promise to Caleb that he would give him the land."

CONNECT THE LESSON

The fulfilled promise

Give your students Student Activity Sheet #236-A and #236-B. Read Student Activity Sheet #236-A together. It is an appropriate activity to review the biblical story. You can add questions related to it.

Spin spin

Give the children Student Activity Sheet #236-B. Help them assemble the wheel to play "Round and Round". Ask the children to follow the instructions for assembling the wheel. They will need scissors, cardboard, glue, paper clip hooks and a two-legged paper fastener. Then, allow them to turn the clip so that the wheel starts spinning, and they can read the word that comes up when it stops. Instruct them to look for the term or place where the word is in the phrase. Let them write the word in the right place or color it. The complete sentence is: "God keeps his promises to those who trust in him and obey him." Have the children read the prayer.

Tell them: "Caleb trusted God and obeyed him. That's why God fulfilled the promise he had made to him. Sometimes the Lord chooses other people to work for him, to help him fulfill his promises. Who helped God fulfill the promise he had made to Caleb?" (Joshua)

Magnet with promise

Before the session, gather magnets from home, or ask for magnets from friends or nearby businesses. If you do not have enough to give one to each child, use tape to hold the papers.

In your group, give each child a magnet, a blank sheet of paper, colors, paints, markers, stickers, etc. Then have them write on the page the following sentence: "God keeps his promises." Tell them they can decorate the paper, cut out the edges, and then glue it to the printed side of the magnet, so they can attach it to a metal surface (like a refrigerator) in their home.

Tell them: "Today we learned that God fulfilled the promise he made to Caleb. God always keeps his promises. Sometimes we have to wait a while, but we can trust that God will do what he promised. Keep this magnet so that you can remember that the Lord always keeps his promises."

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Biblical text career

For this last session of this unit, children should know the memory verse. Today they can practice a noisy competition. Divide the children into two groups. It is wise to advise the teachers in adjacent rooms about this activity or if possible to play outside so the children can shout without interrupting others.

You will stand some distance from your two groups. The first person of each group will run to where you are. When they arrive, they will turn and look towards their group. Then they will scream the first word of the verse. If someone does not know the correct word, they must return to the end of their group's row. Then the next child from that group will run and will say the correct word of the verse, and so forth. The team that finishes first without error will shout the complete verse with the biblical reference, and will be the winner. You should know who is the last child in each group.

Sweet verses

You will need: Student Activity Sheet #214-C and #214-D, a (candy) jar, scissors, construction paper larger than the jar, and colored pencils or crayons. Throughout the year, you will find additional cut-out sections, such as the memory verse for each unit, in candy or candy forms with the verses written on each one. When a child has memorized the memory verse, allow him/ her to cut out the candy from that unit and stick it inside or around the jar. At the end of the year, they will be able to take the jar with "sweets" to their homes. That way they can repeat to their families the verses they learned.

If you wish, and there is time, ask everyone to recite the full verse. Those who did not stick their candy to their candy jar, can do it this time.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Pray for the children. Ask the Lord to make everyone brave like Caleb. He was a man who knew how to fight against enemies, but he also knew how to wait for God to fulfill his promises.

Encourage

If there is still time, review all the lessons in the unit with simple questions that you prepare in advance. Remind them about the leaders who led Israel to the promised land. Encourage the children to trust God the way Joshua and Caleb did, so they can also see how God will never abandon them.

Invite

Invite your children to the next series of lessons so they can learn those exciting lessons. Tell them that this is a good time to bring others to join the group.