



Unit 6 | Session 1

THE PEOPLE DIDN'T GO INTO THE LAND

Numbers 13-14

Moses and the Israelites made their way toward the promised land of Canaan (KAY nuhn). God told Moses to send men to scout out the land. So Moses chose one leader from each family tribe. He told them to see what the land was like, and whether the people living there were strong or weak, many or few.

So the 12 scouts went into the land and traveled around for 40 days. They cut down a cluster of grapes that was so big it took two men to carry it on a pole. Then they went back to tell Moses and the other Israelites what they saw.

“The land is good. It is flowing with milk and honey,” they said. “But the people who live there are strong, and the cities they live in are large and well protected.”

Then Caleb, one of the men sent to scout out the land, spoke up, “We must go up and take possession of the land! We can certainly conquer it with God’s help!” One other scout, Joshua, agreed with Caleb.

But the other scouts disagreed. “We can’t go up against the people! They are stronger than we are. We looked like grasshoppers compared to them!”

The Israelites were afraid, and they cried all night. They accused Moses of bringing

them to Canaan to die. The people said, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

Joshua and Caleb said, “The land we explored is extremely good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will give it to us. Don’t be afraid of the people living in the land; God is with us!”

While the people talked, God came down to talk to Moses. “How long will these people not trust Me?” God asked. God threatened to destroy all the people, but Moses urged God to forgive them. Moses reminded God that He is patient, loving, and forgiving.

God said, “Since you asked, I will forgive them. But no one who complained against Me will get to see the promised land.” God said the Israelites would wander in the wilderness and would not enter the promised land. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites’ children would one day enter the land.

Christ Connection: The Israelites did not trust God. They rebelled against Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He came into the world to take the punishment we deserve for our own rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His kingdom forever.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

- **Think of a time you felt afraid. What did you do? How did you overcome your fear?**

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: FEAR CATEGORIES



Form two or more teams of kids. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct kids to designate one player on their teams as the writer.

Explain that you will call out a letter in the alphabet. Teams will have 20 seconds to think of and write down something people might fear that begins with that letter. Then call on each team to read its answer. Award a point for any unique answers. Teams who share another team's answer receive no points.

Continue playing, calling out other letters (A, B, C, D, F, H, R, S, T, W) for additional rounds as time allows.

- **How do you react when facing something you fear?**

OPTION 2: WHOM CAN YOU TRUST?

» **supplies: sticky notes**

Give each kid two or three sticky notes. Prompt them to write on each sticky note people they can trust (parent or teacher, for example—not specific names). Kids may also list qualities that make someone trustworthy.

Instruct kids to post their sticky notes on a focal wall. Lead them to study the people on the notes. Talk about what makes a person trustworthy. Discuss the difficulty of trusting someone who has let you down and the ease of trusting someone who is consistently faithful.

- **How do you know God is trustworthy?**
- **Why do you think the Israelites doubted that God would take care of them?**



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about a time God's people refused to go into the promised land. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Numbers 13–14.

•What does this story teach us about God?

God knows all things, so God was not surprised that the people living in the land were big and strong. This was the perfect opportunity for the Israelites to show their faith in God by going into the land. We can trust in God because **He is good, and He keeps His promises.**

•What choice did the Israelites have to make? Did they make the right or wrong choice?

The Israelites had to choose whether to trust and obey God by going into the land or to rebel against God by refusing to go into the land. Ultimately, **the Israelites made the wrong choice and refused to go into the land.** They were afraid of the people in the land and did not trust God to keep His promise of giving them the land.

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The Israelites did not trust God. They rebelled against Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He came into the world to take the punishment we deserve for our own rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His kingdom forever.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Explain that Joshua and Caleb trusted God and wanted to go into the promised land. The rest of the scouts were afraid of the Canaanites and refused to obey God in faith. God calls many people to be missionaries all over the world, and they have to step out in faith too. There are people in the world today—including in our own community—who have never heard of Jesus. The world needs missionaries who are willing to teach people the good news of the gospel. Pray that God will send more missionaries to places where people have never heard the gospel. Pray also for missionaries your church supports.

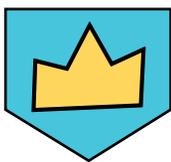
3 PRAY

Father, You are holy, good, and loving. There is no other like You. Thank You for Your love for us. Guide us to obey You and trust You in all things, even when we're afraid. We thank You and praise You for Jesus and that He took our sin upon Himself on the cross so we can be forgiven when we repent and believe. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



GOD RULES.

Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



WE SINNED.

Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



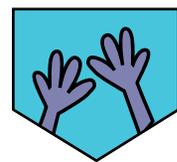
GOD PROVIDED.

Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



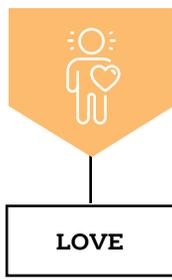
JESUS GIVES.

Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



WE RESPOND.

Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- **Is it wrong to be afraid of things? Why?**
- **What can you do when you feel afraid?**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Numbers 13. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Numbers 14:6-9. Remind preteens that The scouts went into Canaan to explore the land God had promised to give the Israelites. The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land. Only two spies, Joshua and Caleb, said they could take the land with God's help. But the Israelites wouldn't listen to them.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Numbers 14:6-9 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How did God punish the Israelites for not trusting Him?

Guide kids to discuss how God made the Israelites wander in the wilderness. The people who refused to obey God would never enter the promised land. Instead, they would die in the wilderness during the next 40 years. Because of their trust in God's promise, Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the promised land. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Num. 14:30-31.)

2. How does Joshua remind us of Jesus?

Guide kids to recall that Joshua and Caleb trusted God. God planned for Joshua to lead the next generation of Israelites into the promised land. Joshua was not perfect, but His faithfulness reminds us of Jesus, who is perfect. Jesus obeyed the Father and trusted His plan to save people from their sins. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Deut. 28:1-2.)

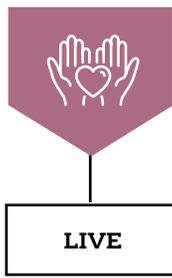
3. How might our beliefs about God affect how we react in hard times?

Prompt kids to discuss what the Israelites believed about God. What did Joshua and Caleb believe about God? Point out that Joshua and Caleb understood that obeying God was always the right choice. It can be hard for us to know how to make the right choice sometimes, especially when other people are making wrong choices. Remind kids that when we are afraid or have doubt, we can always pray and ask God for help to follow and obey Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 3:5-6.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is God like?

God is holy, good, and loving.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to Exodus 15:11. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Point out that Exodus 15:11 shows us what God is like. Challenge kids to memorize it.

Write the key passage on a dry erase board. Lead the kids to read it aloud together. Erase one or two words and challenge kids to read it aloud again, saying the missing words from memory. Continue until all words are erased and see if kids can recite the verse with no words on the board.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for His love. Ask God to help kids trust Him no matter what.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

TRUST BRACELETS

Instruct the kids to make two trust bracelets, one for themselves and another for a friend or family member. Provide three lengths of yarn or string for each kid to braid. Point out how the bracelet's strong braid can serve as a reminder of the power of God and how He is stronger than anything we may face.

Emphasize that God is always with us. When we are afraid and it is difficult to trust Him, the bracelet can remind us of His love and provision for us. Then review the big picture question and answer: **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.**

Encourage kids to give the second bracelet to a friend or family member. Kids should explain the purpose of the bracelet and how it can be a reminder of God's power and trustworthiness.