

Morning Overview

Lesson: Wandering: Spies Go Out

Lesson Objective:

This week we journey with God's people to the very edge of the Promised Land. God has brought them this far, now they must only go in. Tragically the Israelites forget God's promises to them, and they lose faith in God's ability to keep His promises. Their disobedience and unbelief costs them entry into the Promised Land, and this is most evident in God's response to their disobedience and unbelief, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?" (Numbers 14:11) This lesson is another sad story about God's people forgetting that God's promises always come true.

Teaching Points:

- God is faithful and never changes. God keeps His promises.
- God is sovereign (or in control).
- Man is sinful.
- God is kind and merciful.
- God is everywhere all the time.
- God communicates with man.
- God wants people to know He is a great God.
- God is holy. God wants His people to be holy.
- God is all knowing.
- God does not need any help.
- God saves His people.
- God provides for His people.

Scripture: Numbers 13-14

Story: *Vos Child's Story Bible*, Pages 91-93;
Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 80-81;
The Beginner's Bible, Pages 128-131;
The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible, Pages 84-89

Scripture Memory for March:

"It is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." Deuteronomy 32:47

It is no (cross arms to make an "X")

Empty word (use hand to make a puppet and talk)

For you, but your very life, (point at audience)

And by this word you shall live long (put both hands together and then move apart till arms are stretched out)

In the land that you are going over the Jordan (use one hand-arm to make hill or mountain motions)

To possess (take one hand and act as though you are putting a stake in the ground).

Craft: Grape Cluster

Supplies: Cardstock grape cluster with verse, tissue paper squares, cardstock leaves, glue, crayons/markers

Instructions:

1. Color grapes.
2. Crumple tissue paper squares into balls.
3. Glue balls ("grapes") on to the grape cluster.
4. Add a leaf (or two) to the stem.

If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet



Story

Review

Remember our story from last week? The Israelites, God's people, were grumpy and complained a lot about the food they were eating. God was providing His people with food each morning; do you remember what we call it? (Manna) But the Israelites were tired of eating manna; they wanted to return to Egypt to eat melons, cucumbers, fish and other tasty food. This made God very angry because God brought the Israelites out of Egypt where they were slaves. Our story picks up from last week, God has a special plan for His people, but they do not trust God's plan for them. Let's find out what happens in our story...

When Moses was alive, there were no binoculars to see far, far away. But in today's story we learn 12 men had to sneak into the land called Canaan to see what it was like. Right here in Numbers 13 we can read the story! It's in the Bible, and everything in the Bible is absolutely true.

About to Set Foot in Canaan, When Someone Has an Idea

God had made a promise to the Israelites. He promised that He was going to give them a beautiful land where they could live. They had never had a country of their own, the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt. The Israelites had been walking and walking to get to that land, and they were ready to finally live there. God had guided the Israelites to Canaan. Canaan was the name of the Promised Land. Before the Israelites went into Canaan, they wanted to know what Canaan was like.

Spies Are Commissioned

To find out what Canaan was like, God gave Moses some instructions, "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan which I am giving to the children of Israel. Send twelve men." So, Moses did just what God said. He chose twelve men to spy out the land. A spy is someone who goes ahead and looks things over and then comes back and gives a report. Spies are usually quiet so no one knows they're there and they need to look hard so they can see everything. Moses told the 12 spies just what to do. He said, "Go up this way into the south, and go up to the mountains and see what the land is like. Find out if the people who live there are weak or strong, if there are lots of people or only a little, if the land is good or bad. See if there are any forests in Canaan. Find out what kind of cities the people live in. Don't be afraid. Be of good courage!" And then Moses said something else, "Find some fruit and bring it back with you." The Bible says it was the time of year when grapes were growing.

Spying Out the Land

Following Moses' instructions, the spies went up to Canaan through the south, up hills and down into the valleys. The Bible tells us when the spies got to this one valley, they saw some grapes. Not just any kind of grapes, but big bunches of grapes! They were huge and looked very tasty. The spies remembered what Moses had said, so they took a big cluster of grapes right off the grape vine. They were going to take the grapes back to show Moses and the people. The Bible also tells us that the cluster of grapes were so big, they had to put the grapes on a pole and two of the spies had to carry the pole! The spies also took some pomegranates and figs. The land and the fruit looked so good. God had promised that this land would be a beautiful land. After 40 days, the spies came back to Moses and the Israelites.

The Spies Report

The Israelites were ready to hear the report from the spies. "What was Canaan like?" they wondered. The Bible tells us Moses, his brother Aaron, and all the people gathered around. The spies showed everyone the fruit. When the people saw the grapes, they were shocked. The spies said, "We went to the land where you sent us. It's a beautiful land with plenty of space." But (and this is the sad part to our story) the spies went on to tell the Israelites, "But the people who live there are strong. Their cities are big. There are enemies everywhere." The spies were afraid. They did not think they could have the land God promised them. However, one of the spies named Caleb said, "Oh, let's

go, let's go right now to Canaan!" Caleb believed that God would help the Israelites take the land. He had seen how strong the enemies looked, but Caleb knew God was stronger. Caleb believed God would help them move into Canaan. In Caleb's heart, he knew there was nothing to be afraid of. God is stronger than any enemy. But the other spies kept saying, "The people who live in Canaan are so big, why they're as big as giants! And we look like little grasshoppers next to them! We will never be able to fight with them." Those spies did not trust God's promises. Those spies made everyone afraid to go in the Promised Land. Maybe those people living in Canaan were really big, but no one is as big or as strong as God. There was nothing to be afraid of if God was leading them.

Israel Stalls

The Bible says all the Israelites started to cry. They cried all night long. They were sad they came all this way to the Promised Land, but giants were living there. They were afraid and did not know what to do. But they should have trusted the Lord. As the Israelites were crying, they started to blame Moses and Aaron. "Why has the Lord brought us here? Let's return to Egypt. Let's find another leader and go back to Egypt!" they shouted. Another one of the spies, Joshua, said to the Israelites, "The land we saw is very good land. The Lord will bring us into this land, and He will give it to us!" Then Joshua said important words to the people, "Do not disobey the Lord. We must not be afraid of the people in Canaan. The Lord is with us!" The Bible says Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes. That means they were very upset.

Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites had seen all that God did. He rescued them out of Egypt, He guided them by a cloud during the day and fire at night, God thundered and gave them the 10 Commandments at Mount Sinai, and He fed them in the desert. God cared for and guided the Israelites the whole way. Despite God doing these miracles and showing His incredible power, the Israelites did not believe God could help them take the Promised Land.

Two to Ten

Joshua and Caleb were the only spies who believed God. The other ten spies did not trust God. The Israelites believed those ten spies. They disobeyed God and did not think God would take them into the Promised Land. The Israelites were mad at Joshua and Caleb, and they were going to throw stones at them. But then something miraculous happened.

Moses Intercedes for Israel

As the Israelites picked up stones and aimed them at Joshua and Caleb, the Bible says the glory of the Lord appeared before all the children of Israel. We don't really know what that means. But God spoke to Moses, and said, "How long are these people going to disobey me? How long will they not believe me after I've taken care of them?" Moses pleaded to God for the people. That means Moses prayed for them. And God heard Moses and forgave the Israelites.

The Penalty

Even though God forgave the Israelites, there were consequences for their disobedience. God made the Israelites turn around and walk the other way. God would not let Israel go into the Promised Land for forty years. For those forty years, Israel had to walk in the wilderness. All the grownups grew old and died while they were in the wilderness since they did not trust God would keep His promises. As for Caleb and Joshua, the two spies who believed God, God let them live a long time. Once the forty years passed, Joshua and Caleb got to enter the land of Canaan. And when all the children grew up, they went into Canaan too.

God punished the ten spies and all the grown-ups who didn't believe God's Word. But those who trusted God's promises entered into the Promised Land!

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have the kids answer “Yes” if it is true, or “no” with the correct answer if it is false.

- God wants us to worship and love Him. (Yes)
- God will never leave us either. (Yes)
- God always keeps His promises. (Yes)
- The Israelites never found the Promised Land. (No! God led them to the Promised Land.)
- 95 spies went into the Promised Land. (No! Only 12 spies went.)
- The 12 spies discovered the land was filled with chocolate mountains and a candy cane forest. (No! It was a beautiful land filled with huge clusters of grapes and large cities.)
- God promised the Israelites the land. (Yes)
- Once the Israelites heard the report from 10 of the spies, they started to cry and complain. (Yes)
- The Israelites did not think they could take the land from the people living there. (Yes)
- The Israelites wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua. (Yes)
- God stopped the Israelites from stoning Caleb and Joshua by showing His glory to them. (Yes)
- God punished the Israelites by not letting them go into the Promised Land. They wandered for 40 years. (Yes)
- Joshua, Caleb, and the children entered into the Promised Land because they believed God would keep His promises. (Yes)
- God always keeps His promises. (Yes)