

LESSON 40

Israel Spies Out the Land

NUMBERS 13–14



BIBLE TRUTH

FAITH IS REQUIRED TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Numbers 13:17—14:4 from the Scriptures or read story 40, “Israel Spies Out the Land,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Moses’ Appeal
SUPPLIES:
✓ paper and pencils
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **15 MIN**
Moses and Jesus
SUPPLIES:
✓ pencils and paper
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
The Spies Return
SUPPLIES:
✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **15 MIN**
Spies and the People
SUPPLIES:
✓ one copy of Numbers 13—14 with the words of the spies highlighted (Optional: provide enough copies for half of the class.)
✓ one copy of Numbers 13—14 with words of the people highlighted (Optional: provide enough copies for half of the class.)

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Moses sends the spies—God tells Moses to send spies into “the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel” (Numbers 13:2). Moses obeys the Lord and sends twelve spies, one from each of the tribes. Their job is to go in and observe the people, the crops, and the strength of the cities. Forty days later they return with their report.

While in Canaan, the spies see that the land “flows with milk and honey” just as God had promised (see Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5). But they also see cities with strong defenses and soldiers as tall as giants. Their bad reports are filled with unbelief. Caleb tries to quiet the people and says that God will give them the land. But Caleb is outnumbered. The other men make the people afraid by talking about the giants.

The people fall further into unbelief—After hearing about the giants, the Israelites seem to lose all faith that God will protect them. They forget what God has done for them. Their fear becomes anger. They talk of choosing a new leader and returning to Egypt. When Caleb and Joshua try to encourage them about the Promised Land, they even want to kill *them*.

God responds in anger, but Moses mediates on Israel’s behalf—When the frightened Israelites threaten to stone Joshua and Caleb, God stops them by having his glory appear. God then threatens to destroy the Israelites, but Moses intercedes for them. God decides not to kill them but disciplines them by sending them back out into the desert to wander until all the people who had complained have died. God does not want people entering his Promised Land who do not trust him. When the people hear this, they decide to try to enter the Promised Land without God’s help. They are badly defeated by the Canaanites.

Up until now, the people have spent a little more than two years wandering in the desert. Because of their lack of faith in God, they will now wander in the desert more than thirty-five years longer. Here God disciplines the older generation but has mercy on the younger.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Pardon

The word *pardon* is often used interchangeably with forgiveness. To pardon is to forgive or take away the punishment due for a wrong that has been committed. We are all pardoned by God through the sacrifice of Jesus who paid the penalty for our sin on the cross. The word *pardon* is

a legal term meaning to take away sin as though we were never guilty. Such complete removal of our sin speaks of God's amazing grace.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Numbers 14:11–24.

Once again Moses stood in the middle for his people and prayed to God saying, "Please forgive the sins of your people, according to your great steadfast love." God granted Moses' prayer because Moses prayed for the one thing that could save Israel: God's steadfast love and forgiveness.

Although God didn't allow Israel into the Promised Land, he forgave Israel because he knew that one day his Son, Jesus, would stand in the middle as their true mediator and die on the cross for their sins. Centuries later, in a letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul called Jesus the one true mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) who stood in the middle between sinful man and a holy God. Even as Moses prayed, God saw ahead to the day when he would send his Son.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Numbers 13:17—14:4 from the Scriptures or read story 40, "Israel Spies Out the Land," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Moses' Appeal

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils

When God threatened to destroy Israel, Moses appealed to God on their behalf. This exercise is designed to take a closer look at the components of that appeal.

Read Numbers 14:10–20, and ask the class to tell you what three appeals Moses made to God. Tell them these are important and that you will be testing them later on.

1. Moses appeals to God's word and God's promise to bring the people into the Promised Land. Moses says (Numbers 14:15–16) that if Egyptians or other nations heard that God had destroyed Israel they might think that God was unable to do what he said.
2. Moses appeals to God's character—that he is slow to anger and abounding in love (Numbers 14:18). Moses had come to know that God's love for his people was great and appealed to the love of God for them.
3. Moses appeals to God's mercy—that he had forgiven Israel before and could forgive them again (Numbers 14:19).

At the end of class, pass out paper and pencils and see if they can get the three answers correct.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Moses and Jesus

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils and paper

The idea of this exercise is to compare Moses' prayer with Jesus' prayer to see how Moses foreshadowed Jesus as a mediator between God and the people.

Pass out paper and pencils to the children and ask them to do the following:

In one paragraph, compare Jesus' prayer to God in Luke 23:34 with the prayer of Moses on behalf of the people in Numbers 14:19.

When they are finished have some of the children read aloud what they wrote.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The Spies Return

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of two of the spies carrying a giant cluster of grapes on a pole.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Spies and the People

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one copy of Numbers 13—14 with the words of the spies highlighted
(Optional: provide enough copies for half of the class.)
- ✓ one copy of Numbers 13—14 with words of the people highlighted
(Optional: provide enough copies for half of the class.)

Divide the class in half. Assign one group to act as the spies and the other to act as the people of Israel. Separate the two groups, and have them begin to discuss among themselves how they are going to act out their roles.

Give the respective groups their highlighted copy (copies) of Numbers 13—14 and choose a leader to help their group. If you have an adult helper, assign him or her to one group while

you take the other. If you are teaching alone, travel between the groups to help them with their lines.

The idea is to act out the scene as a class. You will serve as the director, prompting each group as to what they should do next if they get stuck. Simply follow the Bible text giving them clues like, “Spies, you have just returned from your spying expedition. Two of you are bold but the rest are afraid. What report are you going to give the people? And, people of Israel, remember how you are going to respond.”

After you act out the first part of the story in which the people respond in fear, use the “Where Is Jesus?” section to point out how Moses mediated between the people and God.