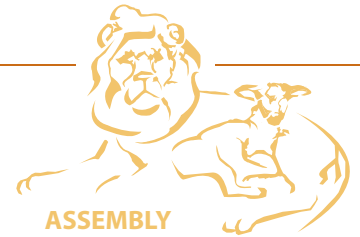


## SPYING OUT THE LAND

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 13-14



*This is an excellent story to illustrate the reality of faith and fear in the human heart. The following are some ideas for creative ways that you can present this material.*

## LESSON IDEAS

### PARABLE OF THE CAN

**Supplies:**

- one container
- set of papers identifying fears
- set of papers with verses addressing fear

First, empty a container. In preparation, fill a container with labeled pieces of paper. Each paper will identify something that makes people afraid (the dark, being alone, strange noises, wild animals, etc.)

Have each child remove one piece of paper from the container. Read its contents then crumple up the paper and throw it away in a trash can. Have the child explain as they do this why this item makes people afraid.

Next, fill up the container. Have another stack of cards or papers with Bible references listed on them dealing with fear (Psalm 23; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 56:3; Proverbs 3:24; John 14:1-2 & 27; Hebrews 13:6, etc.).

Read the verses aloud. Have the children repeat the verses aloud with you a second time. Encourage the children to put their trust in God in response to what each verse is saying. Place each of the verses in the empty container.

Then explain the can parable by discussing these questions.

- Do you know what the container represents? (The container represents a person's heart.)
- Do you know what taking slips of paper out and putting new ones in represents? (The fear slips are the fearful thoughts in our hearts and the Bible verses are God's Word to give us strength and courage to trust in God.)

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### SPYING OUT THE LAND

**Supplies:**

bring props to represent the good land such as a flourishing green plant, fruit, pleasant landscape picture, etc.

Choose some of the children to be the spies who were sent into the land to bring back a report. Choose two children to be Caleb and Joshua. Have the teachers be Moses and Aaron and tell these scouts to go into the land and bring back a report about the land and about those who live in the land. The scouts can walk around the room several times and while they walk pick up certain props that represent good things found in the land: a plant, a piece of fruit, a postcard/picture from magazine of ocean and sunny skies, etc.

Then have the children return to the group describe what they saw. The spies will give a bad report of strong cities and mean people – even giants! As the report is given to the class, (representing the Israelites) can act as if they are terribly afraid: shivers, loud wailing, falling down and hiding.

Have two of the children (Joshua and Caleb) give a good report: a land full of milk and honey; beautiful land and water. Have Joshua and Caleb encourage the Israelites to trust in God's promise that He will give them the land!

Have the Israelites listen at first but then respond again in fear and tell Caleb and Joshua to sit down and be quiet.

Ask one of the teachers to be Moses and speak to the class on behalf of God:

- Remind them that He promised to protect the Israelites and give them the Promised Land, even if this meant fighting against the evil nations who live in that land.
- Remind them that He is not pleased with the bad report given by some of the spies. He will discipline the spies who gave the bad report and the Israelites who believed this bad report by not allowing them to enter the Promised Land.
- Remind them that He is pleased with the good report given by Caleb and Joshua and He will reward them and their children with many blessings, including entering the Promised Land.

Finally, have Moses explain that grumbling and complaining is very serious in



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### Where Is Jesus?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

When the fearful reports of ten of the twelve spies incited the people to fear and not trust the Lord, God became angry at the people's lack of faith. He said, "I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them." Once again Israel fell into sin and once again their mediator, Moses, stepped in for them and appealed to God.

In Numbers 14:20 God says, "I have forgiven them as you asked." Again, looking forward toward Christ, God is able to forgive His sinful people. We, today, are just like the Israelites. Though God provides wonderfully for us, we are quick to complain and quick to fear in adversity. We must trust in our redeemer just as they needed to trust in the God who revealed Himself to Moses. Moses mediated between the sinful people and God. Jesus would one day mediate our case before the Father. Moses however could not provide atonement for our sin. His appeal to God, apart from the work of Christ, would have been unacceptable. God did not hear the appeals of Moses because of Moses, but because of the future mediation of Christ. by dying on the cross for our sin, Christ became the big "M" Mediator, a divine mediator. Moses was only a man who pointed to Christ.

