

Joshua and Caleb

1 BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13:1–14:38

MAIN POINT: The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

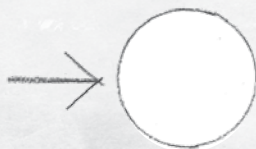
SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)

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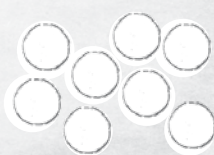
LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(25–30 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Before God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, He promised to bring the Israelites back to the land He had given to Abraham so many years ago. (Ex. 3:8)

God was leading the Israelites to the promised land. When they were close, God instructed Moses to send spies into the land to scout it out. The spies traveled around the land for 40 days, and it was just as God had promised. There was one problem: the people in the land were big and strong.

One of the spies, Caleb, announced, “We must go up and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it.” Caleb understood that God was with them. With God’s

help, they could do anything. Joshua and Caleb understood who God is. When God promises to do something, He will do it.

But the other men were afraid. That night, all of the people wept loudly. They despaired because they did not believe God's promise to lead them into the promised land. The people plotted to find a new leader who would lead them back to Egypt.

God was not happy with Israel. They had turned away from Him and put their trust in themselves. God threatened to destroy the people, but Moses interceded for them. God struck down the spies except for Caleb and Joshua, and He declared that anyone who had sinned against Him would not enter the promised land. The Israelites would wander in the desert for 40 more years.

Help the kids you teach understand that the Israelites sinned when they did not believe God was in control. Point kids to Christ as the perfectly obedient Son who trusted the Father's plan to save people from their sins.



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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 13:1–14:38

God told Moses, “Send men to scout out the land of Canaan (KAY nuhn). I am giving this land to the Israelites.” Moses sent out one leader from each family tribe, just as God commanded.

Moses told the men what to do. “Go see what the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many.” Moses had a lot of questions: Is the land good or bad? Are the cities they live in camps or forts? Is the land good for farming? Are there any trees?

Moses told the men to be courageous.

So the men went and scouted out the land. They traveled around the land for 40 days. They cut down a cluster of grapes in the valley and carried it on a pole. **Then they went back to Moses, Aaron, and the Israelite community to tell them what they saw.**

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

Then Caleb, one of the spies sent to scout out the land, said, “We must go up and take possession of the land! We can certainly conquer it with God’s help!”

But the other men 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 thought Moses and Aaron had brought them to Canaan to die. **The Israelites said, “Let’s appoint a new leader and go back to Egypt!”**

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Israelites.

Joshua and Caleb, who had both scouted out the land, tore their clothes and said to the Israelites, “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!”

The Lord spoke to Moses. “How long will these people despise Me?” He asked. “How long will they not trust Me?” God threatened to destroy all the people, but Moses said, “Please forgive the wrongdoing of the people. I know You are great, faithful, and loving.”

God replied, “Since you have asked, I will forgive them. But none of them who despised Me will live to see the promised land of Canaan.”

Since Caleb and Joshua had followed God completely, God decided to let them enter the promised land. God said that the Israelites who did not trust God would face consequences for their sin. They would wander in the wilderness 40 years, and they would not enter the promised land. All of the spies who went to scout out the land died, except for Joshua and Caleb.

Christ Connection: Caleb and Joshua 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.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover the Israelites’ fear exposed their sinful hearts: they did not trust God. Caleb and Joshua trusted God, and they pleaded with the people. (Num. 14:9) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Joshua and Caleb

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13:1–14:38

MAIN POINT: The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, invite them to share some ways that adults take care of them. (*feed them, clothe them, provide a place to live, teach them, protect them*)

SAY • It's important to have people in our lives we can trust to take care of us. Whom can you trust? [*Invite kids to answer.*]

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Promised Land I Spy” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Promised Land I Spy” activity page. Kids should find and circle the hidden items in the picture.

SAY • Today we will learn about 12 spies whom Moses sent out to learn more about the promised land, the land of Canaan. Canaan is called the promised land because God had promised to bring His people out of Egypt and give them the land that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had once called home.

Let's see if the people of Israel trusted God to provide for them.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Whom can we trust?

Before the children arrive, write on index cards several types of people we can usually trust, one per card. (*parents, teachers, church leaders, police officers, firefighters*)

Hide the cards around the room. Invite the children to find the cards. As a group, talk about how the person on each card is someone we should be able to trust. Ask what would happen if we didn't trust the person on each card. (*We might not stay safe, we might not learn what is true, etc.*)

SAY • We usually trust people who have proven to be dependable in the past, but people often let us down because everyone has a sinful heart.

God is different; He is completely holy and He is completely good. Today we are going to learn that **the Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land** and that was a huge mistake. *We can trust God to take care of us.*

OPTION 2: Trust walk

Before the kids arrive, tape a zigzag path on the floor with masking tape. Encourage the kids to find a partner. One child should wear the blindfold while the other child leads his partner along the path. After a few minutes, kids will switch roles and play again. If kids do not want to use a blindfold, they can keep their eyes closed instead.

SAY • It can be scary to walk when you can't see! You had to trust your partner to keep you on the path. Today we will learn that *we can trust God to take care of us.*



- index cards
- markers

- masking tape
- blindfolds (optional)

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Joshua and Caleb

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13:1–14:38

MAIN POINT: The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

SUGGESTED THEME DECORATIONS: Decorate the classroom to resemble a petting zoo. Place posters of various petting zoo animals around the room and directional signs to the insects, birds, animals, and so forth. You may also show the theme background slide.

Countdown

- countdown video
- “The Big Story” video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins. Show “The Big Story” video to give kids an understanding of where the stories they will be studying in the weeks ahead fit into God’s one big story of salvation through Jesus.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- large plastic insect (preferably grasshopper)
- small box

[Large Group Leader enters wearing khaki pants, a solid-colored polo shirt, and safari hat. Leader is carrying a large plastic insect—preferably a grasshopper—on his or her palm, as if the grasshopper or insect is real.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! My name is [your name] and I work here at the petting zoo. I really enjoy the animals, birds, and insects God has created! Aren’t God’s creatures fascinating? My favorite thing about

a petting zoo is being able to see some of His most interesting creations up close. Anyone know what kind of creature my little friend here happens to be? [*Invite kids to respond.*]

You're right. This little guy is a grasshopper. What can you tell me about grasshoppers? [*Thank kids for their responses.*]

Here are some facts you might not have known about grasshoppers. For one thing, a grasshopper's eardrums, or tympana, are on its abdomen under its wings! Grasshoppers can jump and fly to evade predators, but did you know they can spit brown goo at you too? [*Glance down at your grasshopper.*] Maybe I need to put this little guy somewhere safe. [*Put the grasshopper in the box and set it aside.*]

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Grasshoppers are mentioned in today's Bible story, but before we hop right into the Bible story, let's review what we've learned so far. [*Point to the timeline as you review previous Bible stories.*]

• Giant Timeline

Today we will pick up when the Israelites reached the promised land. Moses sent 12 spies into the land to check it out. What do you think they were looking for as they traveled through the land of Canaan? What would you think the promised land would be like? [*Invite kids to respond.*]

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Joshua and Caleb were two of the spies whom Moses sent into the promised land. Joshua and Caleb trusted God. Our big picture question for the next

few weeks is, ***Whom can we trust?*** Think about that as we hop into the Bible story.

- Bibles
- “Joshua and Caleb” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Numbers 13:1–14:38. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Joshua and Caleb.”

LEADER • Moses sent spies into the land to see what it was like. The spies saw that the promised land was a good land. Crops were growing and houses and cities were built. But the spies also saw that the people who lived in the land were strong and tall—they looked like giants!

Ten of the spies were afraid. They gave a bad report to the Israelites. So **the Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.**

Because the people did not trust God, He punished them by making them wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the children would be able to enter the promised land.

Caleb and Joshua knew whom to trust. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.***

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.

Ask the following review questions:

1. How many spies were sent to check out the promised land? (*12, one leader from each of the tribes; Num. 13:1-2*)
2. What fruit did the spies bring back? (*grapes,*

pomegranates, and figs; Num. 13:23)

3. Who trusted God to give them the promised land?
(*Caleb and Joshua; Num. 13:30; 14:6*)
4. How did God punish the Israelites when they did not trust Him? (*God sent them into the wilderness for 40 years, Num. 14:21-25*)
5. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.***

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

LEADER • *We can trust God to take care of us.* How do we know this? God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to pay the punishment for sin we deserve. God raised Jesus from the dead so we can know that when we trust in Jesus, we will live with God forever. You can trust in God's love for you.

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Joshua 1:9. Invite kids to tell you what the word *courageous* means in their own words.

LEADER • God said that Joshua would lead the Israelites into the promised land. God promised He would always be with Joshua. Later, after Jesus had died on the cross and rose again, He sent the Holy Spirit to be with His people forever!

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Wherever You Go" song

Repeat the verse with the kids. Sing the key passage song.

• “Unit 7, Session 1”
discussion starter
video

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Has anyone ever made you an impossible promise? Watch this video.

Show the “Unit 7, Session 1” discussion starter video.

LEADER • *Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.* Since God always does what is good, He always keeps His promises, and He will always take care of us. How does that help you get through tough times? What would you tell someone who is having trouble trusting God?

• “Mighty Fortress (Our
God Is Faithful)” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • Let’s thank God for always keeping His promises. Sing together “Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful).”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Dear God, thank You for promising to always be with us. Help us to remember that we can always trust You no matter what. Thank You for forgiving those who trust in Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Joshua and Caleb

BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13:1–14:38

MAIN POINT: The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- poster board or dry erase board
- markers

Write the key passage, Joshua 1:9, on a poster or white board for the children to see. Invite the kids to say the key passage with you several times until they are comfortable with the words.

Guide the kids to read the key passage in different voices such as sleepy, happy, high-pitched, low-pitched, and so forth. Finally, guide them to say the key passage in a courageous voice.

SAY • God's Word tells us that we don't have to be afraid.

When we turn away from sin and trust in Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. We are never alone, and ***we can trust God to take care of us*** no matter what happens.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- large sheets of paper
- markers

Invite kids to open their Bibles to Numbers 13–14. Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a large sheet of paper and markers. Tell teams to draw a line down the center of their paper. Kids will label one side of the line *For* and the other side *Against*.

SAY • Have you ever thought of reasons for or against doing

something? Imagine you wanted to buy a game. A reason for buying the game is all the fun you would have playing it. A reason against buying the game might be the cost.

The Israelites had a choice to make: Should we enter the promised land? They had reasons to go and reasons not to go. We are going to read the Bible story and list the good things that the spies discovered about the promised land on the *For* side and the bad things on the *Against* side.

Invite kids to read the Bible story. Adult helpers may need to assist younger kids who are not as confident in their reading skills.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

For:

- The spies said that the land was full of good food and crops. (Num. 13:27)
- It was very good land. (Num. 14:7)
- God would give them the land. (Num. 14:8)

Against:

- The cities were fortified, or well protected. (Num. 13:28)
- The people were stronger than the people of Israel. (Num. 13:31)
- The people looked like giants. (Num. 13:32)

SAY • What did Caleb and Joshua tell the people? [*Read Num. 14:6-9.*] **The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land**, but Caleb and Joshua trusted that God would give them the land like He had promised. So God said they would be the ones to lead the Israelites into the promised land.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Trust your leader

Instruct the kids to stand in a circle and hold hands.

Explain that you are going to call each child by name and give them specific instructions for changing the group's shape. Give kids individual instructions such as, "Take two steps forward" or "Take one step to the right." When you finish, challenge them to name the new shape. If time allows, play again with a new shape.

SAY • You didn't know the shape, so you had to trust that I had a plan. **The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land**, even though they had seen how God delivered them from Egypt and took care of them in the wilderness. They had every reason to trust God, but they didn't.

Guess what? We're not any different than the Israelites. Sometimes we doubt God, too. That's why it is so important to study the Bible and remember how trustworthy God is. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.***

OPTION 2: Make a grape cluster

Provide each kid with a paper plate. Encourage boys and girls to make a grape cluster in the middle of the plate by making thumbprints using green or purple ink pads. Keep wipes handy for cleanup. Help kids write *I can trust God* around the edge of their plates. Invite kids to decorate their plate as time allows.

SAY • The spies brought back fruit from the land of Canaan. A cluster of grapes was so large, two men had to carry it on a pole. This showed the people how good the land was. But the Israelites did not

- paper plates
- green or purple ink pads
- hand wipes (for cleanup)
- markers

trust God to give them the promised land. When you look at the grapes you made, remember all the good things God has given you. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.***

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal and instruct the kids to write about or draw a picture of a time when it was important for them to trust God, even if it was hard to do. As kids work, talk about times when you had to trust God as well.

SAY • Joshua and Caleb trusted God even when the other spies didn't. The Bible says the people even wanted to hurt Joshua and Caleb for saying that God would give the Israelites the land! [See *Num. 14:10*.] It's not always easy or popular to trust God, but it is always the right decision. ***Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.***

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session.

Pray, thanking God for keeping His promise to give the Israelites the promised land, even though the Israelites did not trust Him like they should. Pray that the kids will always remember that God—who gave up His Son, Jesus, to save people from sin—is completely trustworthy.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid
- crayons or markers

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Journal Page

God the Savior

Key Passage: Joshua 1:9

Big Picture Questions: Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb

Numbers 13:1–14:38

The Israelites did not trust God to give them the promised land.

Session 2: The Bronze Snake

Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9

God told His people to look at the bronze snake to be healed.

Session 3: The Promised Land and Jericho

Joshua 2–4; 6

God fought for His people and led them into the promised land.

Session 4: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai

Joshua 7–8

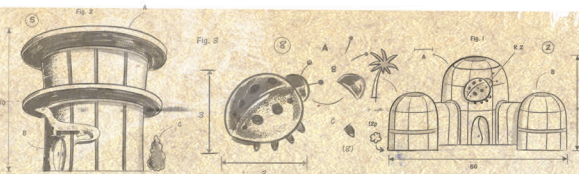
God punished Achan for his sin. Then God fought for His people at Ai.

Session 5: Joshua's Final Encouragement

Joshua 23:1–24:28

Joshua encouraged the people to worship God alone.






**“Haven’t I commanded
you: be strong and
courageous? Do
not be afraid or
discouraged, for the
LORD your God is with
you wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:9

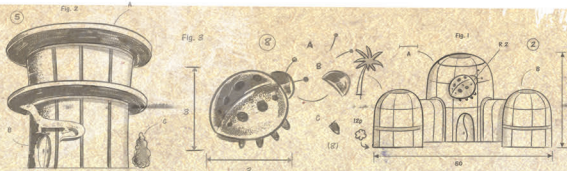


A technical drawing of a fortification, showing a cross-section of a wall with a tower on top. The drawing is labeled with various letters and numbers, indicating different parts of the structure.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Joshua 1:9

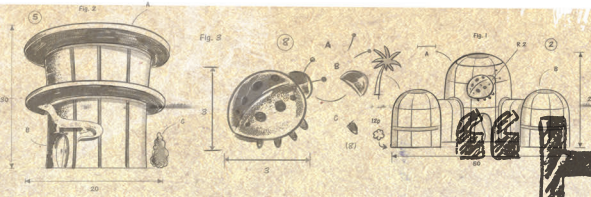




“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9





**“Have I not
commanded you? Be
strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid; do
not be discouraged, for
the LORD your God will
be with you wherever
you go.”**

Joshua 1:9



**The Israelites
did not trust
God to give
them the
promised
land.**

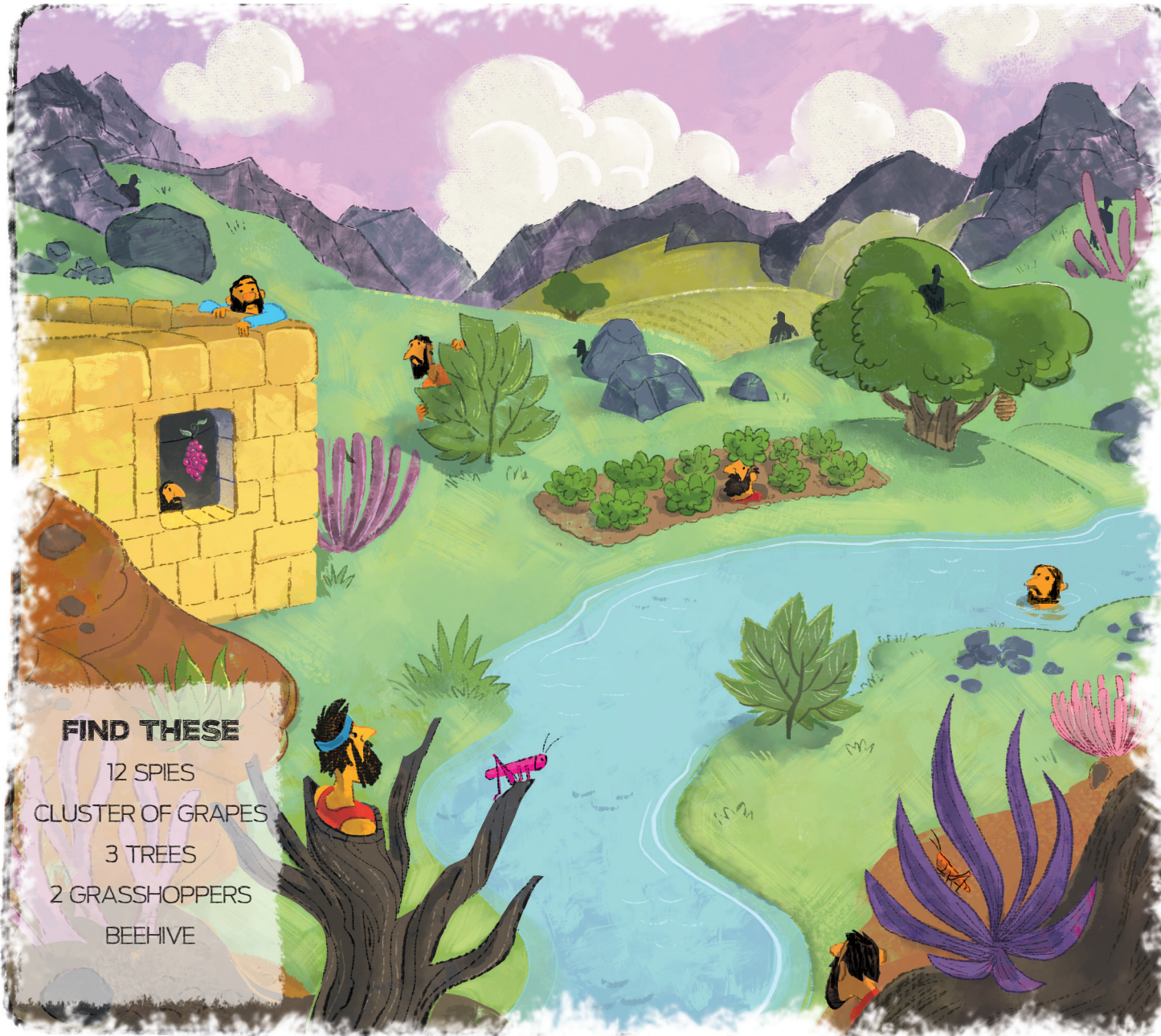




Promised Land I Spy

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

INSTRUCTIONS: Find the items listed below.



FIND THESE

12 SPIES
CLUSTER OF GRAPES
3 TREES
2 GRASSHOPPERS
BEEHIVE

KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Whom can we trust? We can trust God to take care of us.

BIBLE STORY:

JOSHUA AND CALEB

- Moses sent scouts into Canaan.
- The scouts reported that the land was good, but the people living there were too strong.
- Joshua and Caleb believed God.
- The people refused to enter the promised land.
- Israel wandered for 40 years.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Do you think it was easy or hard for Joshua and Caleb to take a stand for God? Why?
- What do you have a hard time trusting God about?
- How have you seen God prove Himself to be trustworthy?

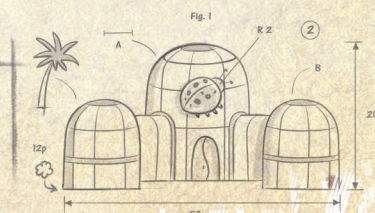
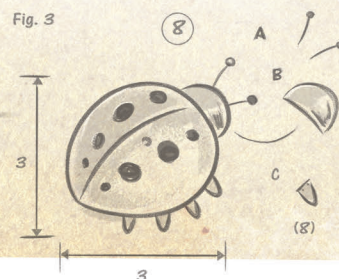
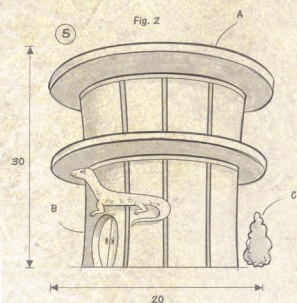
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Walk your neighborhood to “scout it out” for people who need to trust in Jesus. Pray for ways to share with them.
- Go further: Take a step of faith as a family and commit to give above what you normally give to missions.

Younger Kids Activity Pages
Unit 7, Session 1



Whom can we trust?



Whom can we trust?

We can trust God to take care of us.

