

# March 29 Elementary

**Bible Passage:** Joshua and Caleb / Numbers 13-14

**Story Point:** Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land.

**Memory Verse:** “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

**Big Picture Question:** What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

**Christ Connection:** *The Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He took the punishment we deserve for our sin, or rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.*

## **\* BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:**

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 before. (Ex. 3:8) From Egypt, the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and traveled toward Mount Sinai. When they were hungry and thirsty, God provided food and water. (See Ex. 16–17.) Israel spent one year at Mount Sinai, where Moses received God’s law, including the Ten Commandments.

Time and again, the Israelites rebelled against God, Moses interceded, and God pardoned the people. When Israel arrived at the edge of the promised land, God instructed Moses to send scouts into the land. Moses sent out a leader from each tribe. Twelve men, including Joshua and Caleb, traveled through the promised land of Canaan for 40 days. They returned with fruit—grapes, pomegranates, and figs—and gave a report on the land.

The scouts described the land’s abundance, as “flowing with milk and honey.” They gave an account of the people, various tribes who were physically strong and whose cities were fortified. Caleb’s immediate imperative—“Let’s go up now!”—was met with resistance by most of the group. Assessing their own strength against the strength of the inhabitants, they concluded that to move forward would mean certain defeat.

The Israelites complained: “If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness!” Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade the people of God’s presence and protection, but the people would not trust God. So God gave them what they thought was better. He sent them into the wilderness to wander for 40 years. They would die there. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites’ children would enter the promised land.

Help your child contemplate the punishment Israel faced for their failure to trust God and their rebellion. Point out that, as sinners, we have all disobeyed God. But Jesus trusted God perfectly and took the punishment for our rebellion. When we look to Him for salvation, we have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

## **\*STORY:**

**SAY •** After the Israelites left Egypt, they traveled toward the promised land. They camped at Mount Sinai, where God made a covenant with His people. He gave them laws to guide them in how to live and to help them understand His perfect holiness.

They made it to the edge of the promised land. All they had to do was trust God and take over the land! But as we'll see in our Bible story today, the Israelites would not go into the land. Let's find out what happened.

Use the Bible storytelling tips below to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video, or both!

### **Joshua and Caleb: Numbers 13–14**

**God's people** had traveled out of Egypt and **were almost to the promised land. God told Moses to send men to scout out the land of Canaan** (KAY nuhn). This is the land God was giving to the Israelites.

**So Moses sent out one leader from each family tribe. Moses told the leaders to see what the land was like**, and whether the people living there were strong or weak, few or many. Moses had many 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 urged the scouts to be courageous. So the twelve scouts traveled throughout the land 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, Aaron, 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, said, “We must go up and take possession of the land! We can certainly conquer it with God's help!”**

**But 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 people were afraid**, and they cried all night. They thought Moses and Aaron had brought them to Canaan to die. **The Israelites said, “Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”** **Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and said again, “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 not trust Me?” 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 have 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 children of Israel would one day enter the land.**

### **CLOSER:**

**SAY • Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land**, even though most of the Israelites did not.

Have you ever found yourself trying to make the right decision when everyone else is doing the wrong thing? Standing up for what is right can be hard to do. Joshua and Caleb wanted to follow God and obey His commands. They were upset that the Israelites would not trust God and that the people chose to disobey Him. Joshua and Caleb believed that God was with them and nothing could stop them from conquering the promised land.

When the Israelites disobeyed, Moses asked God to forgive them. God did forgive the Israelites, yet their sin still had consequences. The people who refused to obey God would not enter the promised land. Instead, they would die in the wilderness.

For the next 40 years, the people wandered through the wilderness. Only their children, along with Joshua and Caleb, would be allowed to enter the promised land.

### **\*Christ Connection:**

**Christ Connection:** *The Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He took the punishment we deserve for our sin, or rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.*

**SAY •** The Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust Him. They sinned. **What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.** Jesus never sinned. He trusted God perfectly. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin, or rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

### **\*GOSPEL PLAN:**

*(Included in the Activity Pages this week)*

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 3:18.

**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.

## **\*PRAYER**

**SAY** • God, thank You for Your Word. We confess that we sometimes trust in ourselves instead of trusting in You. We know that You are good. You always keep Your promises. Help us follow You and obey You with courage because You love us. Amen.

## **\*KEY PASSAGE / MEMORY VERSE:**

***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."* Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV**

**SAY** • Our key passage comes from the Book of Proverbs, which was written to teach people to make wise choices and live godly lives. In today's Bible story, **Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land**, but the rest of the Israelites did not trust in the Lord. They relied on themselves to decide what was best, and that was a mistake! Over the next few weeks, we'll work together to memorize our key passage.

## **\*DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

### **COMPREHENSION:**

- How many scouts went into the promised land? (12, Num. 13:3-15)
- How did Moses pick the 12 men to go scout out the land? (Moses picked a leader from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Num. 13:4-16)
- What did the scouts report about the land? (It was good, flowing with milk and honey, but defended by strong people with fortified cities; Num. 13:27-29)
- Who were the two scouts who trusted God? (Joshua and Caleb, Num. 13:30)
- Why did God punish the Israelites? (They didn't trust God, Num. 14:2-3)

- What was the punishment for their sin? (*They couldn't enter the promised land, Num. 14:30*)
- **What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.**

### YOUNGER:

Open your bibles together to Numbers 13–14. Discuss the location of Numbers as part of the books of the Law, also known as the Torah—the first five books of the Old Testament. Remind them that these books are called the Law because they contain God's laws for the Israelites to follow.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- Was it sinful for the 10 scouts to feel afraid? *Guide the kids to discuss the idea that feeling afraid is not sinful. We are humans and sometimes we will face things that scare us. The 10 scouts who were afraid sinned when they doubted God and did not trust Him to give them the land He promised.*
- Why do you think God allows us to go through difficult or scary circumstances? *Help kids see that when we face hard times we learn to trust Him. Remind the kids that asking for help is wise. We never have to face scary times alone.*
- How can trusting God help us face our fears? *Guide kids to think about who God is and what He can do. Lead them to see that He has promised His people eternal life through Jesus. When we trust Jesus, we know that no difficult situation lasts forever. We always have hope. We can persevere through hard times by remembering what Jesus did to save us.*

Say • **Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land.** The other scouts were afraid and sinned when they doubted God. When we are afraid, we can choose to trust God.

### OLDER:

Open your Bibles to Numbers 13. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Numbers 13–14.

Remind your kids that the Book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Bible.

Challenge your kids to name the three books before Numbers. (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus*)

Say • The Book of Numbers tells about the Israelites' travels after they escaped from Egypt. [*Point to Egypt (H7) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map.*] They went to Mount Sinai (I9), where God made a covenant with them, and then they went to the edge of Canaan, the promised land (G9).

**Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give His people the promised land,** but the rest of the Israelites rebelled against God because they did not trust Him.

Read Numbers 13:30-31 together. Then ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- What did the Israelites think would happen if they entered the promised land? *Prompt kids to recall that the Israelites thought they would be killed by their enemies. They did not trust that God would give them victory and blessing in the land He promised.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Num. 14:3.)
- Why did God keep the Israelites who didn't trust Him from entering the promised land? *Lead kids to discuss how the Israelites refused to enter the promised land, so God punished them by sending them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. God was right to punish their sin. Only Joshua, Caleb, and the Israelites' children were allowed to enter the promised land.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 3:16-19.)

- Why can we trust God? *Guide kids to discuss what they know to be true about God. Point out that fear can keep us from following God, but God is faithful. He will never leave us. God is good, and He is in control.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 9:10.)

## **\*ACTIVITIES:**

### **“SPY THE LAND” ACTIVITY PAGE**

Challenge kids to find and circle the 3 bunches of grapes, 12 spies, and 5 grasshoppers hidden in the picture.

**Say:** In our story today, we learned about 12 spies whom Moses sent into the promised land. Their job was to see what the land was like. Two scouts encouraged the Israelites to trust God and move into the land. Sadly, the rest of them did the opposite.

### **GRAPE SMASH (if you’re brave!)**

You’ll need 5 balloons and the Gospel Plan (that is with the Activity Page file). Cut the Gospel plan into 5 strips. Put one strip in each balloon and blow it up. Keep in mind that the smaller the balloon, the harder it is to pop, the larger, the easier to pop! Scatter balloons around the room.

**Say:** The bunch of grapes the spies brought back was a sign of how good the promised land was. We are going to “smash” grapes to reveal the Gospel- God’s way to the promised land of eternity with Jesus.

Decide how you’d like the kids to “smash” the balloons. Once all the balloons are popped and you have the strips of paper, put the Gospel plan in the right order and review what each step means.

Encourage kids to ask questions and talk to you about what it means to trust Jesus. As sinners, we have all disobeyed God. But Jesus trusted God perfectly and took the punishment for our sins. When we look to Him for salvation, we have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

### **BALLOON BUNCH (if you have a surplus of balloons and a willing heart!)**

Inflate a bunch of balloons. Have some tape available. Choose someone to be the “stem” (a great job for mom or dad or older sibling or family member)

The goal is for the kids to attach the balloons with tape to the “stem” and to get all the balloons to stay on for at least 5 seconds!

**Say:** “One way to tell that land is good is by looking to see if anything is growing on it. Grapes grow in places that are warm with well-drained soil. In our story today, some of God’s people went into the promised land. Do you think they found good land or bad land?”

## **EMOTIONAL ROLE-PLAY**

Invite kids to act out different emotions. You can whisper a common emotion into the child's ear, such as happiness, sadness, anger, afraid and so forth. They will need to act out that emotion and everyone else will guess what emotion they are pretending to feel.

**Say:** Our feelings are real, but that doesn't mean they are always reliable. It's normal to feel sadness, anger or fear. However, we must be careful about letting our emotions tell us what to do. We can go to God with our emotions and He will help us get through it.