



UNIT 6 | SESSION 1

THE PEOPLE DIDN'T GO INTO THE LAND

NUMBERS 13-14

KEY PASSAGE:

Exodus 15:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The Israelites did not trust God. They rebelled against Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He came into the world to take the punishment we deserve for our own rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His kingdom forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

If you've ever bought a house, you likely know that even the "most perfect" house really isn't perfect. There seems to always be some compromise that must be made: location, yard size, location of a bathroom, school district, price, and so forth. The choice is then ours to make: do we live with the compromises we need to make, or do we pass on the house—no matter how perfect it is in other ways—and keep looking?

When the Israelites reached the border of the land of Abraham and their ancestors, they sent in twelve men to scout the territory. The report was glowing: The land was amazing—plenty of room and abundant crops. It was perfect in almost every way. There was a concern, and it was a big one: the people living there were scary-big.

Think back to that house you had fallen in love with. You were already imagining what it would be like to live in it. You were deciding where your furniture would go. It seemed too good to be true. But then, you discovered that imperfection, and your hopes and dreams came crashing down. Now magnify that many times over, and you can begin to relate with what the Israelites must have felt like in that moment. Now where would they go? What would they do?

The tragedy of this account is not found in

what the people felt in that moment; rather, it is found in their failure to recognize that the land was indeed perfect in every way. There was no drawback or compromise. The people living there were inconsequential.

Why? Because this was the land of promise—of God's promise. The same God who had promised this land to them and to their ancestors before them was the same God who had revealed His infinite power in rescuing them from the Egyptians. He was the same God who was with them at that moment. Did they believe the people were too big, or did they believe God was too small?

Joshua, Caleb, and Moses would try to plead with the people to trust in God, but the people refused. Instead of entering the land in faith, they turned from the land in fear. Not one of the adults of that generation, except Joshua and Caleb, would step foot into that land. Instead, they were forced to wander in the wilderness of judgment because of their rebellion against God. That is the tragedy of this account.

TIMELINE

c. 1446–1445 B.C.: God gave Moses His law at Mount Sinai.

c. 1444 B.C.: Spies scout the promised land.

c. 1405 B.C.: Moses died at the age of 120.

c. 1404 B.C.: Joshua led Israel into the promised land.

WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “ Think of a time you felt afraid. What did you do? How did you overcome your fear? ”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: FEAR CATEGORIES



Form two or more teams of kids. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct kids to designate one player on their teams as the writer.

Explain that you will call out a letter in the alphabet. Teams will have 20 seconds to think of and write down something people might fear that begins with that letter. Then call on each team to read its answer. Award a point for any unique answers. Teams who share another team's answer receive no points.

Continue playing, calling out other letters (A, B, C, D, F, H, R, S, T, W) for additional rounds as time allows.

SAY “ How do you react when facing something you fear? In today's story, we will hear how the Israelites' fear kept them from entering the land God promised. ”

OPTION 2: WHOM CAN YOU TRUST?

Give each kid two or three sticky notes. Prompt them to write on each sticky note people they can trust (parent or teacher, for example—not specific names). Kids may also list qualities that make someone trustworthy.

Instruct kids to post their sticky notes on a focal wall. Lead them to study the people on the notes. Talk about what makes a person trustworthy. Discuss the difficulty of trusting someone who has let you down and the ease of trusting someone who is consistently faithful.

SAY “ Today's Bible story is about a time when the Israelites struggled to trust God. God had always been faithful to the Israelites, but they doubted that He would take care of them. Let's find out what happened to the Israelites. ”

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

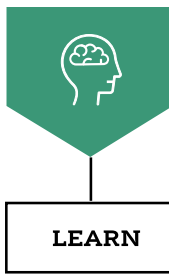
SAY “ Hello! It is so good to see you today. I'm [your name]. If you brought your Bible today, hold it up. [Provide Bibles for kids who need one.] Can anyone tell me what the Bible is about? [Allow kids to respond.] The Bible is God's Word. It tells us the wonderful story of God's plan to rescue sinners.

In the Bible, we can read about real people and events that happened long ago. These stories teach us important truths about our world and God, who made it all. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “ This week, we have a new big picture question and answer: **What is God like?** Now that is a great question. What words would you use to describe God? [Allow kids to respond.] Thank you for sharing those ideas! We are going to focus on three words: **God is holy, good, and loving.** We know what good and loving means; do you know what holy means? God's holiness describes His perfect goodness, purity, and righteousness.

Let's say our big picture question and answer together: **What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.** As you hear a story from the Bible, listen for ways God showed His holiness, goodness, or love. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Numbers 13–14. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The People Didn’t Go Into the Land.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PEOPLE DIDN’T GO INTO THE LAND

“Moses and **the Israelites made their way toward the promised land** of Canaan (KAY nuhn). **God told Moses to send men to scout out the land. So Moses chose one leader from each family tribe.** He told them to see what the land was like, and whether the people living there were strong or weak, many or few.

So **the 12 scouts went into the land and traveled around 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 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, **spoke up, “We must go up and take possession of the land! We can certainly conquer it with God’s help!”** One other scout, **Joshua,** agreed with Caleb.

But the other scouts 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 **accused Moses of bringing them to Canaan to die.** The people said, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

Joshua and Caleb said, “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!”**

While the people talked, God came down to talk to Moses. “How long will these people not trust Me?” God asked. 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 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 Israelites’ children would one day enter the land.**

Christ Connection: The Israelites did not trust God. They rebelled against Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He came into the world to take the punishment we deserve for our own rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His kingdom forever. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Incorporate hand gestures: As you tell the story, utilize dramatic hand movement and body gestures to reflect the complaining and fear of the Israelites.

Use props: Bring grapes, milk, or honey to help illustrate the story. Be sure to keep food allergies in mind.

Small Group Discussion/Questions

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Open your Bible to Numbers 13. Who told Moses to send scouts into Canaan? [Choose a volunteer to read aloud verses 1 and 2.] In verse 2, what did God say He was going to give the Israelites? [Allow kids to respond.] Before Moses chose the 12 scouts to go into Canaan, God already planned to give them the land.

God knows all things, so was God surprised that the people living in the land were big and strong? This was the perfect opportunity for the Israelites to show their faith in God by going into the land, trusting that He would go with them. Did any of the scouts have faith that God would give them the land? Let's look at Numbers 13:30. [Choose a volunteer to read the verse aloud.] Joshua and Caleb showed faith in the Lord, but the people still doubted and cried in fear.

Because the Israelites did not trust in God's faithfulness to give them the promised land, they faced consequences for their sin: 40 years of wandering in the wilderness—one year for every day the scouts were in the land. We can trust in God because He is good, and He keeps His promises. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The Israelites did not trust God. They rebelled against Him. Jesus trusted God perfectly. He came into the world to take the punishment we deserve for our own rebellion against God. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and invites us into His kingdom forever. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ How did God punish the Israelites for not trusting Him? ”

Guide kids to discuss how God made the Israelites wander in the wilderness. The people who refused to obey God would never enter the promised land. Instead, they would die in the wilderness during the next 40 years. Because of their trust in God's promise, Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the promised land.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Num. 14:30-31.)

| **SAY** “ How does Joshua remind us of Jesus? ”

Guide kids to recall that Joshua and Caleb 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.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Deut. 28:1-2.)

| **SAY** “ How might our beliefs about God affect how we react in hard times? ”

Prompt kids to discuss what the Israelites believed about God. What did Joshua and Caleb believe about God? Point out that Joshua and Caleb understood that obeying God was always the right choice. It can be hard for us to know how to make the right choice sometimes, especially when other people are making wrong choices. Remind kids that when we are afraid or have doubt, we can always pray and ask God for help to follow and obey Him.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 3:5-6.)