

God Gives Caleb Courage

Numbers 13:1–14:9

3

August
Week 3



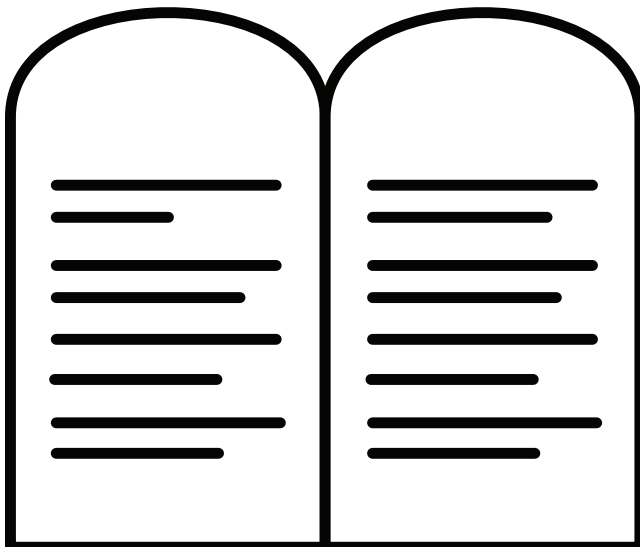
Teacher Background

What Happens: Twelve spies go to scope out the land God promised to the Israelites. Ten come back terrified, with reports of giants. But two, Caleb and Joshua, are confident that God can give them the land, despite the enemies, because God is bigger than our fears.

Why It Matters: Kids are afraid of tangible things, like spiders and snakes, as well as abstract things, like whether their parents will get divorced or die. These fears are real for kids, often as real as the giants in the Promised Land. Help kids see that no matter how big their fears are, God is bigger than our fears.

Think About: Think about a scary event from when you were a kid. What helped you through it? Looking back, how can you see that God was at work?

Pray that God will comfort kids when they're afraid.



Point

God is bigger than our fears.



Key Verse

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

QUICK TIP

You set the tone for vulnerability during discussions. As kids share about their fears, they'll go deeper if you go deeper. If you share about your fear of spiders, kids will also stick with more surface-level fears. If you share that you're scared of getting cancer or losing your job, kids will go deeper with their fears, too.

This Lesson at a Glance



WHAT HAPPENS	KIDS DISCOVER
CHECK IN Connect about the week.	The importance of friendships at church.
SET THE STAGE Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.
EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE Spy for items around the room.	That when fears seem big, God is bigger.
HANDS-ON DISCOVERY Make hand weights.	God is strong enough to handle our fears.
PLAY A GAME Knock down cups with fears written on them.	How God can help us defeat fear.
PRAY TOGETHER Learn about written prayers and pray the Prayer of St. Francis.	How God can bring peace when we're afraid.

EASY SUPPLIES

- o Bible
- o 12 inflated green or purple balloons
- o string
- o empty milk carton or jug
- o jar of honey
- o empty water bottles with lids (1 per child)
- o funnels
- o duct tape (different colors)
- o permanent markers
- o sand or play sand
- o disposable cups (3 per child)
- o permanent markers
- o sponge balls or rolled-up socks (at least 3)



CHECK IN (5 MINUTES)

- Thank kids for coming and have kids give a high-one (high-five with just one finger) to a friend.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having kids do a “happy birthday” wave.

ASK: What’s one new thing you learned this week? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share! For groups of more than six, have kids share in pairs so everyone has a turn to talk.



SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)

SAY: Today we’re going to learn that ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** We’ll learn about something big and scary that some people in the Bible saw.

ASK: What’s the biggest animal you’ve ever seen in real life? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share!

SAY: Sometimes big things can be scary! Let’s see what big things the men in the Bible saw and how well they trusted that ➡ **God was bigger than their fears.** The Bible is one way God shows us how big he is. As we read his Word today, let’s see what he does in us.



EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- Bible
- 12 inflated green or purple balloons
- string
- empty milk carton or jug
- jar of honey

EASY PREP

- Cut 6 pieces of string, each about 3 to 4 feet long. Then tie an inflated balloon to each end.
- Hide the milk carton or jug, honey, and balloons around the room.



OBSERVE



Open your Bible to Numbers 13, and show kids the words.

SAY: In today’s Bible story, some people went on a special spy mission! You see, God’s people had been journeying for a long time to get to a new land to live in. God had promised them the land of Canaan! But other people lived in Canaan, so they had to scope out the place and see what it would be like to take it over.

So the Israelites sent out 12 spies to check out the land.

I’ve hidden some items around the room to remind us of what the spies saw. Look around the room and see what you find that’s unusual, and if you find something, bring it back. But remember, you’re a spy, so tiptoe and be sneaky!

Allow time for kids to explore the room. Then gather them back together.

ASK: What did you find?



Have one child hold up the milk and another hold up the honey. Read Numbers 13:27.



Invite kids to hold up the grapes as you read Numbers 13:23.

ASK: What sounds good about this land?

THINK BIGGER

SAY: So far this sounds like a great place! But they saw something else. They saw giant people! But they had mixed reports on whether or not that was a problem.



Read Numbers 13:30-33.

ASK: What did you see in our room that's bigger than you?

ASK: Name some things outside of our room that are even bigger than those things.

SAY: Caleb knew the people were big. But he also knew ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** With God on their side, they didn't have to worry about the giants. God is so much bigger! Listen to something he and his friend Joshua said.



Read Numbers 14:7-9.

SAY: Caleb and Joshua knew God was on their side. But 10 of the spies forgot about that. They focused on how tiny *they* felt next to these enemies.

They called the giants “helpless prey” compared to how big God is. They were talking about prey versus predator, and prey is the animal that gets eaten by a predator.

When we look at things like a big wall in our room, we might feel small compared to it. But when we think about the Great Wall of China or the Grand Canyon, all of a sudden this wall doesn't seem so big! That's kind of like thinking about our fears and thinking about God.

➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** Our fears might be like this wall—bigger than us. But God is like the Grand Canyon—so much bigger!

LEARN A RHYME

SAY: When we're afraid, we can remember that ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** We can be brave like Caleb and Joshua.

Let's learn a short rhyme you can repeat to remember that ➡ **God is bigger than your fears.** Whenever you feel scared, you can say this rhyme.

Fear, fear go away;

You are God's helpless prey!

Have kids repeat the rhyme with you several times.

PRAY: God, thank you that ➡ **you're bigger than anything we fear.** Thank you that you can help us when we feel afraid. In Jesus' name, amen.



CELEBRATE SMALL

With only a few kids, everyone gets to find something hidden in your room!





SUPPLIES

- empty water bottles with lids (1 per child)
- funnels
- duct tape (different colors)
- permanent markers
- sand or play sand

EASY PREP

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



QUICK TIP

Play sand is available year-round at home improvement stores.

QUICK TIP

Ripping duct tape can be hard for kids, especially younger ones. You can rip several pieces and hang them from the edge of your craft table for kids to grab and use.

MAKE A WEIGHT

SAY: Let's make a reminder of God's strength when we're scared.

Give each child a water bottle, and set out the other supplies. Have kids follow these steps.

- Name some fears as you pour sand into the bottle using the funnel. (Older kids will need to help younger kids with this.)
- Put the lid back on the bottle.
- Cover the bottle completely with duct tape using a variety of colors.
- Older kids, write the Bible point, **God is bigger than our fears**, on the duct tape.

WEIGHT LIFT

SAY: Your weight is full of heavy sand that reminds you of your fears. But ➡ **God is bigger than our fears**. He's strong enough to lift those fears off of you, just like you're strong enough to lift your weight. And God can help *you* be strong and courageous like Caleb and Joshua.

Let's do some weight lifting to practice getting strong. Each time you lift, say something about God, such as that he's big or amazing.

Lead kids in weight lifting exercises. Invite kids who know different weight lifting moves to demonstrate for the group, so they can work out different arm muscles.

SAY: The more we focus on how big and amazing God is, the more our faith muscles grow and the more God gives us strength over our fears.

TALK ABOUT IT

ASK: What makes you feel strong and courageous?

ASK: How can you know God is always bigger and stronger than your fears?

SAY: ➡ **God is bigger than our fears**. When Caleb and Joshua saw enemies and giants, they knew God was bigger and could defeat anyone. When we look at our fears, we can remember that they're nothing compared to God!

After all, God's Son, Jesus, showed he's more powerful than a stormy sea, sickness, and even death! He beat all those things! Jesus is bigger than anything we fear, so we can ask God for strength and courage.

Set aside the crafts for kids to take home.



KNOCK DOWN FEARS

SAY: Sometimes our fears can seem big and scary. But today we're discovering that ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** He can knock our fears right over.

- Give each child three cups.
- Have kids write one fear on each overturned cup, then stack them into a triangle.
- Lead kids to stand across the room and take turns throwing the sponge balls or rolled-up socks at the fears, trying to knock them over. Each thrower gets three turns, and younger kids may stand closer.
- You can play music while kids play the game if you'd like.
- When everyone has had a turn to throw, gather kids together.

SUPPLIES

- disposable cups (3 per child)
- permanent markers
- sponge balls or rolled-up socks (at least 3)

QUICK TIP

If you have mostly younger kids, skip writing on the cups. Stack the cups for kids, having them call out a fear for each cup you stack.

TALK ABOUT IT

ASK: What would it be like if you could *really* knock down something you're afraid of?

ASK: Why do you think God doesn't just knock our fears down for us all the time?

SAY: We may wish that facing our fears was as easy as knocking down cups. God *could* knock down our fears because ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** But trusting God when we're scared builds our faith and helps us know God better.

When you're afraid, remember that ➡ **God is bigger than our fears.** Then imagine taking God's hand and letting *him* handle those frightening things.





PRAY TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)



SAY: We all face fears. One of Jesus' friends, called St. Francis of Assisi, wrote a special prayer asking God to help him bring peace to scary times. Let's pray it together now. As we pray, we'll act out the words to help us understand them.

First the prayer mentions stormy, messy, scary things in life. As I say those things, we'll move our arms like big waves in a storm. Like this! Demonstrate.

With every storm, St. Francis asks God to bring something peaceful. When I say those things, we'll calm the waves and spread out our arms peacefully. Like this! Demonstrate.

PRAY: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

(Storm motion) Where there is hatred,

(Peace motion) let me sow love.

(Storm motion) Where there is injury,

(Peace motion) pardon (or help);

(Storm motion) Where there is doubt,

(Peace motion) faith;

(Storm motion) Where there is despair,

(Peace motion) hope;

(Storm motion) Where there is darkness,

(Peace motion) light;

(Storm motion) Where there is sadness,

(Peace motion) joy.

Amen.