Joshua and Caleb

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Numbers 13:1–14:38

**MAIN POINT:** Caleb and Joshua trusted God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Joshua 1:9

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

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

Check out the video “The Big Story” for a picture of this quarter’s part in God’s big story of redemption.

God the Savior
God told Moses, “Send men to go look at 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 had told him to do.

Moses told the men what to do. He said, “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 trees in it?

Moses told the men to have courage.

So the men went and looked at the land. They traveled around the land for 40 days. They cut down a big bunch of grapes in the valley and carried it on a pole. Then they went back to Moses, Aaron, and the Israelite people.

“We went into the land where you sent us,” they said. “It is very nice, flowing with milk and honey. But the people living in the land are strong, and the cities they live in are large and strong.”

Caleb, one of the spies who saw the land, said, “We must go up and make the land ours! We can do it with God’s help!”

But the other men disagreed. “We cannot go up against the people; they are stronger than we are! We looked like grasshoppers compared to them!”

All of the Israelites started to cry, and they cried all night. They thought Moses and Aaron had brought them to Canaan to die. They said, “Let’s pick a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all of the
Israelites. **Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies**, tore their clothes and **said to the Israelites**, “The land 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!”

God asked Moses, “How long will these people dislike Me? How long will they not trust Me?” God threatened to destroy all the people, but Moses said, “Please forgive their sin. I know You are great, faithful, and loving.”

God replied, “Since you have asked, I will forgive them. But no one who complained against Me will live to see the promised land.” Since Caleb and Joshua had followed God completely, God let them enter the promised land. God said that the people would face consequences for their sin. **They would wander in the wilderness and would not enter the promised land.** God said only Joshua, Caleb, and the young people would enter the promised land.

**Christ Connection:** Caleb and Joshua trusted God. God had a plan for Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Joshua reminds us of Jesus. Joshua was not perfect, but Jesus is. Jesus trusted His Father’s plan to save people from their sins.
Welcome and worship with song
Welcome preschoolers to worship by playing “A Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful).” Greet preschoolers with a smile. When all the preschoolers have arrived, sing an action song such as “Be a Leader” to engage them and help them feel welcomed.

Watch or tell the Bible story
Invite preschoolers to tell you about a time they felt like they weren’t big enough to do something. Maybe they wanted to go on a ride at the amusement park or hang out with their older siblings’ friends. Give a personal example.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, the Israelites felt they weren’t big and strong enough to do what God wanted them to do. Joshua and Caleb, however, said that God was on their side.

Open your Bible to Numbers 13:1–14:38. Tell the Bible story in your own words, using the script provided, or show the video. Read the bolded version of the script for young preschoolers.

Practice the key passage and a Bible skill
Place a Bible marker or ribbon at Joshua 1:9. Invite a few volunteers to come up one at a time and open your Bible
to the key passage. Point to the key passage as you read it aloud, inviting children to say each word after you.

**SAY** • God spoke these words to Joshua when God called Joshua to be a leader of the Israelites. Do you think Joshua felt brave after God promised to be with him? When we trust in Jesus, God gives us the Holy Spirit to always be with us!

Sing the key passage song “Wherever You Go” together.

**Learn the big picture question and answer**

**SAY** • The Israelites had trouble trusting God. Our big picture question and answer is about trusting God. Our big picture question is, *Whom can we trust?* The answer is, *We can trust God.* We can trust God in everything because we know He is good.

**Respond through song and prayer**

**SAY** • **Caleb and Joshua trusted God.** God had a plan for Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Joshua reminds us of Jesus. Joshua was not perfect, but Jesus is. Jesus trusted His Father’s plan to save people from their sins.

Sing “Mighty Fortress (Our God Is Faithful)” and “Always” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “Anything.” You may also collect an offering.

**SAY** • God, teach us to trust You just as Caleb and Joshua trusted You. Forgive us for not believing You will take care of us. Thank You for loving us and sending Your Son, Jesus, to save people from sin. Amen.

**Transition to small groups**
SESSION TITLE: Joshua and Caleb
BIBLE PASSAGE: Numbers 13:1–14:38
MAIN POINT: Caleb and Joshua trusted God.
KEY PASSAGE: Joshua 1:9
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Sneaky obstacle course
Before the session, set up an obstacle course around the room. Use objects in your room to create the course. Go through the obstacle course yourself to make certain children can complete it safely. Invite the preschoolers to travel as if sneaking around the course and return back to the starting point.

SAY • Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land. Ten of them said, “We can’t do this!” Caleb and Joshua trusted God to give them the land He had promised them.

Make grape paintings
Give each preschooler a sheet of paper. Instruct the children to use purple paint, spring-hinged clothespins, and circular sponges to make grape clusters. The preschoolers may use their fingerprints as a substitute for sponges.

SAY • Moses told the spies to bring back some fruit from Canaan. Two men had to carry one cluster of grapes on a pole! The land was very good, and Caleb and Joshua trusted God to give them the land. Joshua reminds us of Jesus. Joshua was not perfect, but Jesus is. Jesus trusted His Father’s plan to save people from their sins.
Explore with magnifying glasses
Provide a preschooler with a plastic magnifying lens. Bring in nature items, such as rocks, leaves, flowers, sliced fruits, and so forth. Allow the preschoolers to look at the objects while you briefly review Moses’ instructions to the 12 spies.

SAY • The spies said the land was very good and fruitful, but they did not trust God to give them the land! Caleb and Joshua trusted God. Like Joshua, Jesus trusted His Father’s plan to save people from sin.

Play a memory game
Print two copies of “Canaan Land Items” and cut out the cards. Place the cards facedown on a table. Invite preschoolers to take turns turning two cards over at a time to make a match. Play with the cards facing up for younger preschoolers.

SAY • These pictures show things the men saw when they went to look at the promised land. The land was very good, but the people there were strong. The Israelites did not believe God would give them the good land, but Caleb and Joshua trusted God.

Practice the big picture question
Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle with you. Begin a pat-pat, clap-clap rhythm. Once preschoolers have the rhythm down, say the big picture question and answer. When you say trust, hold your fists on top of each other at chest level. When you say God, point upward. Start slowly and see how quickly the preschoolers can complete the pattern as you progress.

SAY • Whom can we trust? We can trust God! We can trust God to do what He says He will do!

Transition to large group closing

God the Savior
Review

Point to the giant timeline or big story circle as you review today’s Bible story. Ask the following review questions:

1. Who told Moses to send men to explore Canaan? (God)

2. How many days did the men explore Canaan? (40)

3. Were the people living in Canaan weak or strong? (They were strong and tall.)

4. Which spies trusted God to help them take the land? (Caleb and Joshua trusted God.)

5. Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

SAY • God had promised Abraham that his descendants would live in Egypt for a long time until God brought them back to the land of Canaan. Caleb and Joshua trusted God to keep His promise, but the other spies didn’t. As a result, the Israelites had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years!

Sing the key passage song or unit theme song.

Pray

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have.

SAY • God, You kept Your promise to the Israelites, even when they didn’t trust You. Help us to remember that what You say, You do. We can trust You. Amen.
Missions story
If your preschool ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity and talk about the reasons for it. If you do not have a missions activity planned, talk about what it looks like to trust God in every situation, even when other people do not trust God. You may also show the “Loving Muslims” missions video.

SAY • Wow! There are so many Muslims around the world who need to know Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin. Many of those people live in the United States. Most of us probably have Muslims as our neighbors or friends. God wants Muslims to know that He is the one true God whom they can trust. Let’s pray God gives us opportunities to love Muslims—and all people—to point them toward Jesus.

Play “I Spy”
Select one volunteer at a time. Instruct the volunteer to describe an object around the classroom without saying the name of the object. Allow the other preschoolers to guess the object she is describing. Whoever guesses the correct object can pick the next item and describe it.

SAY • Moses sent 12 spies to find out about the land that God had promised them Caleb and Joshua trusted God. God had a plan for Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Joshua reminds us of Jesus. Joshua was not perfect, but Jesus is. Jesus trusted His Father’s plan to save people from their sins.
God the Savior

Key Passage: Joshua 1:9

Big Picture Questions: Whom can we trust? We can trust God.

Session 1: Joshua and Caleb
   Numbers 13:1–14:38
   Caleb and Joshua trusted God.

Session 2: The Bronze Snake
   Numbers 20:1-20; 21:4-9
   God told His people to look at the bronze snake.

Session 3: The Promised Land and Jericho
   Joshua 2–4; 6
   God led His people into the promised land.

Session 4: Achan's Sin and the Defeat of Ai
   Joshua 7–8
   God punished Achan for his sin.

Session 5: Joshua's Final Encouragement
   Joshua 23:1–24:28
   Joshua told the people to worship God.
“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9
Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:9
“Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9
“Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9
Caleb and Joshua trusted God.
Whom can we trust?
Whom can we trust?

We can trust God.
Egypt

Egypt is a country with millions of people. Many Egyptians live near the Nile River because most of the country is made up of the Sahara Desert. Most of the people in Egypt are Muslim; they do not believe Jesus is God’s Son. They do not believe Jesus died on the cross and came back to life to save people from sin. Pray for Christians in Egypt to tell others about Jesus. Pray for the Beja and the Nubian people groups.

North Africa

Eight different countries make up North Africa: Western Sahara, Mali, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Mauritania. The people who live there speak many different languages, but mostly they are Muslims. They do not believe Jesus is God’s Son. They do not believe Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin. Pray for God to send missionaries to the North Africans.

United States

The United States of America has hundreds of millions of people who live there. The United States has always been a country where people can worship as they want, and many people move to the United States from all over the world. Most Americans say they are Christians, but only a small number of people who say they are Christians go to church. Pray for missionaries to build churches and tell people in America the good news about Jesus. Pray for American Christians to come to church to worship together.

Islam

Islam began in the Middle East by followers of a man named Muhammad. Muslims believe Allah (their god) sent the angel Gabriel to Muhammad with the words of the Qu’ran, the Muslim holy book. Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet and a good man, but they do not believe Jesus is the Son of God. They do not believe Jesus died on the cross and came back to life to save people from sin. They do not believe people can know God and have a relationship with Him. Muslims believe they must do good things to go to heaven. Pray for missionaries who tell Muslims that God loves them and sent His Son, Jesus, to save them from sin.
Instructions: Print, cut apart, and use as directed in the Preschool Worship Guide.