

THE FALL-SHORT REPORT

The Twelve Spies
Numbers 13:1–2, 25–14:24
1445 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God is worthy of our trust.

BIBLE VERSE

O my God, in You I trust. Psalm 25:2

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God is the ultimate in trustworthiness.

LAW & GOSPEL

In fear, I grumble and fail to trust God's promises.

God always keeps His promises. He sent His Son to save me from my sin through His sacrifice on the cross.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Moses chooses one man from each of the twelve tribes and sends them to spy on the land God has promised. The spies report a land of great plenty but occupied by mighty, fearsome people. Despite Caleb and Joshua's pleas to seize the land promised to them, the people rebel. Moses pleads for mercy, and God promises to care for His people. At the same time, He condemns the Israelites to forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Of all the adults, only Joshua and Caleb will live to enter the Promised Land.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Numbers 13:1–2, 25–14:24 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read Numbers 13:3–24 and study notes in *TLSB* for more detail and context.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Empty plastic water bottle for each child; small items such as crosses, coins, jewels, and beads; uncooked rice; stickers; strong glue
- Cardstock
- Grapes and pretzel sticks, fig bars
- Paper plates
- Play dough, rolling pins and other play-dough utensils, plastic fruit or pictures of fruit

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs, using music found in the digital resource center or your own favorite songs.

SAY

- Do you trust your parents to give you food? Do you trust they love you and will help you? Today, you'll hear about people who trusted in God and some who did not.**
- Start by telling a true short story. **Do you believe my story? Why or why not?** (Discuss why they trust some people and not others.) **In our Bible narrative today, we're going to learn about how God's people put their trust in the wrong place.**

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for Jesus. Help us trust in You no matter what. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use the following activity to talk about the Bible narrative as you read it.

- FOR A MIX OF AGES** Do a quick review of all that God and His people had been doing since they left Egypt with Moses as their leader. Lead your students in pantomiming the events listed in the first paragraph of one of the Bible narrative found on the following page. When you finally get to the Promised Land, do an action to indicate "Whew, we made it!" As you tell the rest of the narrative, divide your students into Joshua, Caleb, ten other spies, Moses, and the Israelites. Continue to lead them in pantomiming the narrative while you read or tell of the events. Have students make big gestures to show how the ten spies described the people in the Promised Land. Do this and other actions for the spies, Joshua, Caleb, Moses, and the Israelites.

In case you need to clarify the time line: the spies are sent into the Promised Land not long after the tabernacle is built, but because of the bad reports, they refuse to go into the land that God has promised them. Because they do not trust God, they must wander in the wilderness for forty more years. Joshua and Caleb are the only ones from their generation who are allowed to enter the Promised Land. Everyone else will die before getting to the Promised Land. Thus begins the forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- What did the spies see in the new land?
- What did the scared spies say?
- What did Joshua and Caleb say?
- Ten of the spies were afraid to enter the Promised Land. What are you afraid of? When does being afraid prevent us from doing what God wants us to do?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion, using these key points.

- The spies saw good food and big strong people living in the Promised Land.
- Ten of the spies were afraid. They didn't think they were strong enough to fight and win against the people in the land.
- Joshua and Caleb said they should go into the land and trust that God would give them victory.
- Listen to what children are afraid of. Remind them that God promises to always be with them.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Even though we do not always trust God, He is faithful to us in sending His Son, Jesus.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Sing the song at the end of the story with children.

God was taking His people to the new land He had promised to give them. The people walked and walked. One day, God told Moses, the leader of His people, to send twelve men to this new country. They would be spies. A spy is someone who tries to find out something in secret.

Moses told the twelve men, “Go to this new country. See if the land is hilly or flat. See if the people who live there are many or few. Find out if they are strong or weak. See if they live in tents or big buildings. Find out if the land has many trees and good food to eat. Go and be good spies.”

What do you think the twelve spies saw?

The spies walked and walked to the new land. They saw hills. They saw water. They saw trees and lots of yummy fruit—juicy pomegranates and delicious figs! They cut a branch with one cluster of grapes. The cluster was so heavy, two men had to carry it on a pole between them!

The spies watched and listened for forty days. When they came back, they told Moses and the people what they saw. “The land is good,” they said. “It is full of good fruit and all kinds of other good food too. Look at these big grapes! But the cities have strong walls, and the people who live there are tall and strong too!”

But two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, trusted God. These men said, “The land is good. God will give it to us. He will be with us. Don’t be afraid.”

Many of the people shook with fear. They thought, “The tall, strong people will fight against us! We aren’t strong enough to fight.” The people grumbled. They said bad things about Moses and God.

Then, God said that the ten spies and all those who grumbled could not go to the new land. Only their children and Caleb and Joshua would live there. After that, God’s people lived in the desert for forty more years. God forgave their sin and took care of them. Many years later, God let the people’s grown children and Caleb and Joshua go to the new land to live, just as He promised. This land was called Canaan.

Joshua and Caleb trusted God’s promises. They knew God was good. You can trust God to keep His promises too. He will always care for you. He is with you when you are afraid. He sent Jesus to be your Savior, and He forgives your sins.

Sing this song to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

The spies in the land walked all around, all around,
all around. (*Walk in place.*)

The spies in the land walked all around, all through
the land.

The people in the land are big and strong, big and strong,
big and strong . . . (*Flex muscles.*)

Ten spies who came back were scared and sad,
scared and sad, scared and sad . . . (*Shake.*)

Two spies who came back were brave and bold,
brave and bold, brave and bold . . . (*Hands on hips.*)

Our God up in heaven is strong to save, strong to save,
strong to save. (*Make finger cross.*)

Our God up in heaven is strong to save; we can trust
in Him.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

It had been about a year since the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. God had shown He could defeat Israel’s enemies. He provided daily food for His people. He revealed His will in the Ten Commandments. God gave Moses instructions for building the tabernacle, where He would dwell with His people. God moved His pillar of cloud on top of the tent and filled it with His glory. When it was time to go, the pillar of cloud rose from the tent. The Israelites followed the pillar of cloud as it led them.

Finally, Israel reached the Promised Land. God told Moses to send one man from each of the twelve tribes to go into the Promised Land and to get information about that land. The twelve men spent forty days there. The land was very good, but ten of the twelve spies didn’t trust God. They told the Israelites that big, strong people were living there. Those people had huge cities with thick walls, and the Israelites would all be killed if they tried to go in.

But two spies trusted God and remembered His power. One was Joshua, Moses’ servant. The other was Caleb,

from the tribe of Judah, the tribe Jesus would come from. They told the Israelites to be brave and remember how God had destroyed Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. It would be easy for God to give them the Promised Land.

But the people wouldn’t listen. All night long, they cried in their tents. Then, God’s glory shined out from the tent of meeting. God was very, very angry at Israel. He told Moses He would destroy them because they did not trust Him or believe His promises.

But Moses prayed. He reminded the Lord of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. He begged God to forgive His people.

God listened to Moses and did not destroy the people. But since the grown-ups didn’t trust God, they wouldn’t enter the Promised Land. Every grown man would die in the wilderness except Joshua and Caleb, who trusted God. God would give their children the Promised Land. God killed the ten unbelieving spies and sent Israel back into the wilderness to wander for forty years.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

I Spy Walkabout

Have children pretend to be the spies in the Bible story. Lead them on a walk and have them look for things they see, hear, smell, and feel (e.g., cross, Bible, plant, banner, bell, candle). Lead them back to your circle area. Talk about what the spies saw and what the children saw and heard. How do the things they spied remind them of God's love?



Treasure Bottles

Give each child a clean, empty plastic water bottle with a cap. Set out small treasures to put in the bottles, such as crosses, coins, jewels, and beads. Have the children put the tiny treasures inside the bottle. Add uncooked rice to fill bottle two-thirds full. Glue the lid shut. Give children stickers to decorate the outside. Show children how to tip the bottle back and forth to spy the treasures inside. Talk about treasures, or blessings, God gives us each day.



Bible Verse Fun

The Bible says, "O my God, in You I trust." Have children say the Bible Verse after each line you say. Add actions to each line.



When I'm hungry and need something to eat,

Children: **O my God, in You I trust.**

When I'm sick and can't stand on my feet,

Children: **O my God, in You I trust.**

When I'm afraid and shake with fright,

Children: **O my God, in You I trust.**

When I'm all alone in my room at night,

Children: **O my God, in You I trust.**

Postcards from the Promised Land

On half sheets of cardstock, have students draw the Promised Land on one side and write a letter home to their family on the other side. Have students identify if they are one of the ten spies who exaggerated about the bad things or if they are Joshua or Caleb.



Promised Land Snack

Serve grapes and pretzel sticks and talk about the spies carrying the grapes back. Or, serve fig bars. Talk about how the spies said the land was good for growing food. It would be a good place to live, very different than the desert. They brought back giant clusters of grapes and figs.



Feeling Faces

Talk about faces we make when we feel different ways. Give children three paper plates to draw happy, sad, and scared faces. Name a situation and have them show the appropriate face. Ask, **How we can trust God? How does He help?** Example: **How do we look when we feel alone?** (Sad) **How does God help us?** (He gives us friends and parents.)



Play-Dough Fruit

Set out play dough, rolling pins, utensils, and plastic fruit or pictures of fruit. Encourage children to make play-dough fruit. Ask, **What is your favorite fruit? In our Bible narrative, the spies found lots of good food in the Promised Land.**



LEAVE

SAY

We can certainly trust God above all else. God kept His promises to His people in the Old Testament. God kept His promise to send a Savior when He sent Jesus to live, die, and rise again to rescue us from our sins.

PRAY

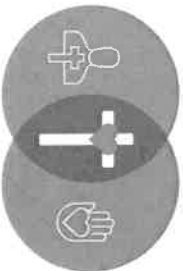
Dear Lord God, You are the one true God, the same God who kept Your promise and delivered Moses and the Israelites, the same God who kept Your promise and sent Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You, Lord, that we can trust You above all else. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

THE FALL-SHORT REPORT

LESSON 3

Numbers 13:1–2, 25–14:24

GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR TRUST.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God guides me to trust in Him and His plan for my life.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I am made new through the blood of Christ and made His child through my Baptism.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can explain, using instances from the narrative, why God is worthy of our trust.

YOUTH

I can give examples to demonstrate why God is worthy of my trust.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is the ultimate in trustworthiness.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know I can trust God.

BIBLE VERSE

O my God, in You I trust.

Psalms 25:2

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Moses chooses one man from each of the twelve tribes and sends them to spy on the land God has promised. The spies report a land of great plenty but occupied by mighty, fearsome people. Despite Caleb and Joshua's pleas to seize the land promised to them, the people rebel. Moses pleads for mercy, and God promises to care for His people. At the same time, He condemns the Israelites to forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Of all the adults, only Joshua and Caleb will live to enter the Promised Land.

TAKING IT HOME

- ▶ *On the Go*—Ten of the spies were scared to enter the Promised Land. What are some of your fears? When does being afraid prevent us from doing good things to God's glory?
- ▶ *At MeditTime*—When the people disobeyed God, what did Moses ask God to do for them? In what part of the worship service do we say words like the ones Moses said to God?
- ▶ *Something to Do*—Play a game of I Spy. What are some of the good things you see? Pray together, giving thanks as a family for God's good gifts.
- ▶ *Before Bed*—The twelve spies were given a difficult job. Think of a tough job you are dealing with, like a test, a project, or a new family member. Ask God to help you trust that He will give you all you need to carry out this job.

Psalm 25:2
O MY GOD, IN YOU I TRUST.

Leader Devotion LESSON 3
THE FALL-SHORT REPORT—THE TWELVE SPIES
NUMBERS 13:1-2, 25-14:24

BIBLE TRUTH

God is worthy of our trust.

BIBLE VERSE

O my God, in You I trust. Psalm 25:2

LAW & GOSPEL

In fear, I grumble and fail to trust God's promises.

God always keeps His promises. He sent His Son to save me from my sin through His sacrifice on the cross.

DEVOTION

Most spy movies are filled with familiar themes. A handsome or beautiful spy assumes a false identity in order to infiltrate an enemy nation or corrupt corporation. Once on the inside, the spy uses high-tech gadgets and cunning to discover the secrets required to defeat the enemy. Sometimes, it seems that, even with fancy gadgets and insider information, the task ahead seems impossible. When you face challenges, do not doubt God's love and care for you. Trust Him to act in ways that may seem impossible to even imagine.

Pray: "Lord, we confess that we are not able to fulfill our calling without sin. Forgive us for Christ's sake, and lead us through every trial. Amen" (*TLSB*, p. 237).

LESSON 3 OPENING

THE FALL-SHORT REPORT—THE TWELVE SPIES

What do I have in my hand? *It's a ball.* In a moment, I am going to do something amazing with this ball! I am going to drop this ball and catch it in my other hand before it hits the ground. Amazing! Do you believe that I will do it? Raise your hand if you trust that I will catch the ball. Let's see if you are right. *Drop the ball and catch it in your other hand.* (Practice this ahead of time.) What happened? I caught it! Amazing! I told you I was going to catch it, and I did. Now, I'm going to drop the ball and catch it again. You've seen me do it once. Do you trust that I can do it again? *Drop the ball again and catch it again.* I did it again! Now, do you trust that I'm able to catch this ball whenever I say I will?

In this week's Bible lesson, we will hear about how some of God's people trusted that He could save them. Others doubted God. They had forgotten about all the times He had saved them already. He had saved them from slavery in Egypt. He had given them food and water whenever they needed it. He had led them safely through the desert to the Promised Land. And they still didn't trust Him! It's almost like God had shown them He was able to catch them (*drop the ball and catch it*) over and over. But many still didn't trust in Him. A few of His people did trust Him, and we will hear about what happens in the lesson.

God is still taking care of His people, just as He took care of the Israelites in the Old Testament. He is able to catch you (*drop ball and catch it*), and He promises He won't let you fall. The psalm writer says, "The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down" (Psalm 145:14). God loves you, and He saved you by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, and because of that, you will live with Him forever. So the next time you are scared or worried about something, remember God's promises and His love for you in Christ.

Pray: Dear God, thank You for loving us and protecting us just as You protected Your people in the Old Testament. Amen.

LESSON TEXT

Numbers 13:1–2,
25– 14:24

BIBLE TRUTH

God is worthy of our trust.

FAITH FOCUS

The Eighth
Commandment

LAW & GOSPEL

In fear, I grumble and fail
to trust God's promises.

**God always keeps His
promises. He sent His
Son to save me from my
sin through His sacrifice
on the cross.**

BIBLE VERSE

O my God, in You I trust.
Psalm 25:2

VISUAL HELPS

Small ball

THE FALL-SHORT REPORT—THE TWELVE SPIES

Unit 5, Lesson 3

God Always Keeps His Promises

Directions: Select one of the promises of God printed below and write it on the lines provided in the picture frame. Draw a picture or write a few sentences about a time when God kept that promise to you.

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. *Psalm 34:18*

[Jesus said,] “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” *John 14:27*

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

[Jesus said,] “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” *John 3:16*

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*

