LESSON 2

TWELVE ISRAELITES EXPLORE THE PROMISED LAND



Aim: **To show the children that we need to trust God and not let the difficulties that we see make us doubt his power.**

Scripture Reading: **Numbers 13:1–2, 17–33; 14:20–25**
Study the whole of Numbers chapters 13 and 14 if you can.

Memory Verse: **Numbers 14:9**
"[T]he Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

Ask the class if they like riding in a car. They will probably all say yes, especially the boys. But if you give a ride to a little three-year-old child, who has never been in a car before, he will probably cry. He may be frightened by the noise of the engine and he may not like being bumped up and down. He will want to stop the car and get out.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Moses was leading the Israelites to the land of Canaan, which God had promised to give them. He sent out people to find out what this land was like (13:1–2).
2. These 12 explorers (one person from each tribe) were told to note what kind of crops grew there, whether the towns had strong defences, and what kind of people lived there (13:17–20).
3. The explorers stayed away for 40 days and then reported back to Moses and the people. They also brought along some examples of the lovely fruit that grew there. A branch with only one bunch of grapes on it was so big that two men had to carry it (13:23, 25–26).
4. **Show Picture 2.** Joshua and Caleb are the two men in front of Moses with the large bunch of grapes, the pomegranates and the figs. **You can also mention other fruits, like oranges, which the children know and which grow to a large size in Canaan (now called Israel).**
   The 12 explorers could not agree among themselves. They all said that the land was very good (13:27), but 10 of them were frightened of the people of Canaan. They were very strong and tall, they reported. Three of these men are shown in the picture: see the fear on their faces. One is showing how tall the people of Canaan are (13:28).
5. Then Caleb gave the report that he and Joshua had prepared. They advised Moses to enter into the Promised Land immediately (13:30). An argument began. The other 10 explorers were so afraid that they even lied and said the land was bad (13:31–33). They saw all these difficulties and forgot to keep their eyes fixed on their powerful God. The people listened to these 10 explorers of little faith.

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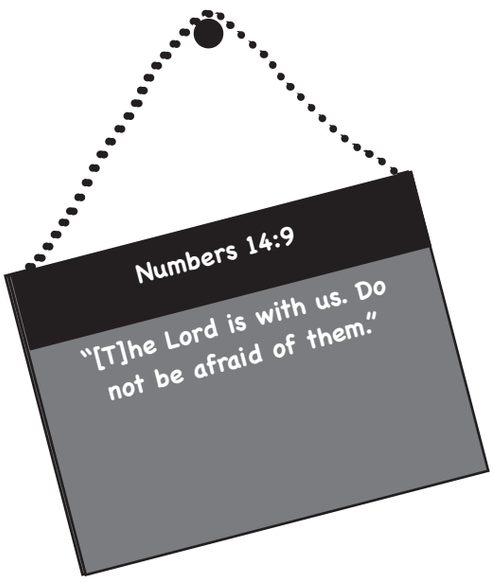
6. God knew these people would not build a strong, faithful nation in Canaan. As a result, they had to wander in the desert until all the adult Israelites who did not trust God had died. Their children would be the ones to enter into the Promised Land once they had grown up. Joshua and Caleb, however, would survive to enter Canaan (14:20–24).

Our Response to the Story

Ask the children to think about something they are worried about or frightened of. Then encourage them to tell God about this fear and ask him for the faith and the power to overcome it. Give a short time for silent prayer during which the children can do this.

Instil the Memory Verse

Point out that these were Caleb's words to the Israelites.



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