

Lesson 61

Moses Sends the Spies

Moses sent twelve men to spy out the promised land.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. When we started the book of Exodus, we learned that the Israelites were living in Egypt. God blessed them with many children, and their families grew until there were many people. Then a new pharaoh came to power, and the Israelites became his slaves.

Who did God raise up to rescue the Israelites from slavery? Moses.

God protected Moses as a baby and called him to lead the people. God did many great miracles through Moses and his brother Aaron to punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians for refusing to let the Israelites go. After the ten plagues and the exodus out of Egypt, God continued to protect his people. He parted the Red Sea and destroyed Pharaoh's army when the soldiers chased after the Israelites. Then he provided food and water for his people in the wilderness.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and instructions to build the tabernacle, a special place of worship. Everything in the tabernacle was made so that it could be packed up and carried to a new camp whenever the pillar of cloud directed them to move as they made their way to the promised land.

The Promise of God

The Israelites followed God's direction and traveled until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

We also call this land the promised land. Why is it called that? I'll give you a hint: someone we learned about received a promise from God when he moved to Canaan. Allow discussion.

Canaan is the land God promised to give Abraham and his descendants when he moved there hundreds of years earlier. This promise passed from Abraham to his son Isaac and then to his son Jacob. Then many years went by in Egypt, and the Israelites, Abraham's descendants, were finally on their way to live in Canaan. All they had to do was go in and take it from the people who were living there: the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

Wait a minute! That's a lot of nations already living in the land. But these people didn't know God or worship him.

Do you think they would want to give up their good land to the Israelites who worshipped a God they didn't know or care about? No!

No. They wouldn't give up the land and their homes without a fight. God knew this would scare the Israelites, so he gave them another promise.

Exodus 23:20–23

Slide #3

Slide #4

Who will read God's promise in Exodus 23:20–23? Assign readers.

Who did God promise to send before the people to guard them and guide them? An angel.

God promised that his angel would lead them in the right direction and keep them safe as they entered the land.

What did God command the Israelites to do in verse 22? Obey his voice and do all that he said.

What would happen if they obeyed? God would be an enemy to their enemies.

Adversary is another word for an enemy, so God was promising that his angel would protect them and help them fight against their enemies when they came to the land with all those other people living in it.

What did God say he would do to those nations at the end of verse 23? Blot them out.

That's another way of saying he would completely destroy them. Those are great promises for the Israelites!

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

Slide #5

Let's look at our Class Notes. See if you can "spy" the correct answer below.

Who will read and answer #1? Choose a reader. Land. Have students complete #1.

And who will read #2? How did God say he would guide them? Choose a reader. An angel. Have students complete #2.

The Spies' Report

Before the Israelites entered Canaan, God told Moses to send 12 men to spy out the land. What does a spy do? Allow discussion.

Prepare Spy Clue envelopes and place them around the room before class time.

A spy is someone who secretly collects information, usually on an enemy, and reports it. These spies were from each tribe of Israel. Joshua, Moses' assistant, was one of the spies. He had led the Israelites in the battle against the Amalekites. Caleb was another spy, and he was from the tribe of Judah. Their mission was to collect information: Was the land good or bad? Were the people weak or strong? Were the cities like camps or did they have walls around them? And what kinds of things grew in the land?

The 12 spies accepted their mission and traveled all over the land of Canaan for 40 days finding out all they could.

Print one set of Spy Clues and put each one into an envelope. Place the clues around the room for students to find. Today, you have a spy mission just like the 12 spies! Your mission is to collect 9 envelopes that are hidden around this room. They each have clues about the land of Canaan. When you find one, take it back to your seat, look inside, but keep it secret until we are ready to reveal what you found. Spies have to work quickly and quietly, so I'm going to give you only a few minutes (or more/less time depending on class and room size) to silently find all the clues and get back to your seats. Everyone ready? Go! Set the timer and allow students to collect one envelope per student or team of two or three. Give a final countdown and then have students return to their seats.

Let's use our clues to find out what information the spies brought back after their mission in Canaan.

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Whoever has clues #1, #2, and #3, will you please put them up on the board? Allow students with pictures of fruit to attach them to the board with tape or poster putty.

What can you tell about the land of Canaan from these clues? Fruit grew there.

Numbers 13:23

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Everyone turn to the book of Numbers, chapter 13.

Slide #9

Let's find out what kinds of fruits the spies found in Canaan and brought back with them. Who will read Numbers 13:23? Assign a reader.

Good things grew there like grapes, figs, and pomegranates.

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. So, the spies brought back all this fine, tasty fruit. But what about the land itself? What was it like? Who has clues #4 and #5? Allow students with pictures of milk and honey to attach them to the board.

Numbers 13:27

Slide #13

What does milk and honey have to do with the land? Who will read Numbers 13:27? Assign a reader.

How did the spies describe the land? It flows with milk and honey.

Hmm. Does that mean there was honey oozing all over and milk flowing in the rivers instead of water? Allow discussion.

This expression doesn't mean that there were actual rivers of milk and honey. It means that the land was good and plentiful. It had many trees and lots of grass and water, so it was good for keeping animals, for building cities, and for growing food like the wonderful fruit they found.

Slide #14

Slide #15

Let's add our new clues about the land to our Class Notes. Who will read #3 for us? Choose a reader. 12. Have students complete #3.

And #4? How long did this spy mission take? Choose a reader. 40. Have students complete #4.

Now #5. Will someone read that? Choose a reader. Grapes. Have students complete #5.

Will someone read #6 for us? Choose a reader. Milk and Honey. Have students complete #6.

Slide #16

Slide #17

So we've found out that the land and its fruit were very good, just like God told them. But there were a lot of people living there already. What about them? Who has clues #6 and #7? Allow students with pictures of a walled city and a strong man to attach them to the board.

What do these clues tell us about the people in Canaan? Allow discussion. They have walled cities and the people are strong.

Numbers 13:28

Slide #18

Let's hear what the spies had to say. Who will read verse 28? Assign a reader.

What did the spies say about the people living in the land? They are strong.

And what about the cities? Fortified and very large.

Cities that were fortified back then usually had high walls protecting them.

That makes sense. If you were the leader of a city, which would you choose to build? A camp with tents where the enemy could sneak in and attack at night, or a place with walls all around to keep the enemy out? Allow answers.

Walled cities were harder to attack than those without walls. The Israelites were probably hoping that the cities in the land were open camps, but they weren't.

Slide #19

Slide #20

There was one more piece of information the spies brought back. Let's look at that. Who has clues #8 and #9? Allow students with pictures of a giant man and a grasshopper to attach them to the board.

Numbers 13:31-33

Slide #21

Slide #22

How do these clues fit together? What do they tell us about the people in Canaan? Let's read what the spies said about them. Who will read Numbers 13:31–33? Assign readers.

What did some of the spies say about the people in verse 31? They are stronger.

How did the spies describe the people at the end of verse 32 and in verse 33? Great height. Sons of Anak.

Great height means that the people were very tall. They were giants! They were the descendants of Anak.

What does the grasshopper have to do with this? The spies said they felt like grasshoppers compared to the people there.

Slide #23

So let's write down what we learned about the cities and the people in the land. Who will read #7 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Walled. Have students complete #7.

What about the people? Who will read #8 for us? Choose a reader. Giants. Have students complete #8.

The Israelites' ResponseSlide #24

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. So, ten of the spies came back and said, "Oh, yeah, it's good land all right—milk and honey and fruit all over. The problem is that there are GIANT people there! There's no way we can take this land." They let their fear take over and forgot that God had already promised this land to them.

There were two spies, however, who insisted they could take the land with God on their side. Those two spies were Joshua and Caleb. They knew this was a very good land that God had promised to them. The people just needed to trust God to help them conquer the enemies who were living there.

What do you think the Israelites did? Did they listen to Joshua and Caleb and enter the promised land, or did they turn back in fear? Allow discussion.

Numbers 14:4

Slide #25

Let's find out what they decided in Numbers 14:4. Who will read that? Choose a reader.

What were they planning to do? Choose a new leader and go back to Egypt.

When Moses and Aaron heard this, they fell on their faces! They were very upset at the people's response to the spies' report. They knew that God would not be pleased. The people were fearful and not trusting God to fulfill his promise of giving them this land.

Numbers 14:6–10

Slide #26

Slide #27

Slide #28

But Joshua and Caleb trusted God. Let's see what they told the people. Follow along as I read Numbers 14:6–10. Read the verses.

How did Joshua and Caleb feel about the land? They knew it was a good land.

What did Joshua and Caleb tell the people? The Lord will give the land to us; just don't rebel or be afraid.

How did the people respond when they heard from Joshua and Caleb?

What were they going to do to them? Stone them.

Of the 12 spies, Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who had faith in God. They knew that with God on their side, they could defeat any people—even giants! The Israelites were thinking about trying to win battles with their own strength, and they let their fear take over instead of trusting God. Their fear turned into anger, and they picked up stones to throw at Joshua and Caleb to kill them!

Suddenly the Lord appeared and spoke to Moses. He was furious with the Israelites. They had traveled such a long way and finally made it to the promised land. God had promised to send an angel to protect them and go before them. But the people would not listen.

Moses begged God to have mercy on the Israelites. God listened to Moses and didn't destroy them all, but he promised that the Israelites would wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all the adults 20 years and older died. How sad to think that all those who had seen God rescue them from Egypt and Pharaoh's army never got to see the land "flowing with milk and honey." Only the young people under 20 years old and Joshua and Caleb, the only spies who trusted God, would enter the promised land.

Slide #29

Let's complete our Class Notes. Who will answer #9 and tell us who had faith to enter the promised land? Choose a reader. Joshua and Caleb. Have students complete #9.

And #10. Who didn't get to enter the promised land? Choose a reader. 20. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #30

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. When the Israelites finally reached the promised land, Moses sent in the 12 spies. Ten of the spies came back afraid. Only Joshua and Caleb were courageous and trusted in the promise of the Lord. The Israelites listened to the 10 fearful spies, and they did not believe God's promise. And so they did not enter the land but wandered in the desert for 40 years.

Like the Israelites and the ten spies, we sometimes get scared, don't we? Maybe it's something like a bad storm, or your dog getting lost, or someone being sick, or having to move or change schools. Or maybe things happen in a way that's very different than what you thought should happen. These things can be scary and frighten us. But God wants us to be like Joshua and Caleb. He wants us to trust him—even when things are really hard or confusing. Joshua and Caleb believed God's Word—that what he said was true. They had confidence in God and his promises and were not afraid.

When we go through hard times, God wants us to be confident in his promises and trust in him. His Word tells us that he is faithful, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. When we believe these things about God, we can be just like Joshua and Caleb. We don't need to be afraid. Review the meanings of these attributes from the Attributes of God Poster and discuss how believing them can keep us from being afraid.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Scissors or knife
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
- Pencils or white board markers
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

- Review Questions
- White board or chalkboard

Markers/chalk

Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

Review Questions
Small paper strips
Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and “wild” written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team’s basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team’s turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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