

**THE SPIES**



**Passages to Study:** Deuteronomy 1:19-46.

**Read with the class:** Numbers 13:17-33.

**Texts for memorization:**

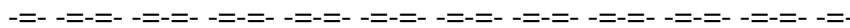
**Younger:** Psalm 106:24.

**Older** Psalm 106:24-25.



**OBJECTIVES: To teach:**

1. That the Lord allows us to have experiences that strengthen our faith.
2. That lack of faith can lead one to make great mistakes.
3. That unbelief is sin.
4. That the sin of unbelief leads to disobedience.
5. That it is most important for each one to believe and obey the Word of God.



**SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS:** Background of a desert scene showing the Kadesh area. Figures of Moses choosing twelve spies and assigning them their duties. A map of the Israelites journey showing the 640 kms. They traveled to reach this place.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- In ancient times it was customary to send out spies or scouts to reconnoitre a land before entering it, in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the area. Deut.1:21-22; 2:22-23.
- It was not really necessary for the children of Israel to do this. They had received great and wonderful promises from the Lord about the good and fertile land He was giving them. Ex.3:17; 13:5; Lev. 20:24,
- He had also told them about the enemies who lived in this land, whom He would judge for their sinfulness.
- Despite all these promises and the evidences of God's care of them up to this time, the people do not fully trust the Lord.

**Sug.** Ask the students to give an example of complete trust. It is not a leap in the dark but a response to step out on what is revealed by the light. Trust is not just an intellectual assent to a truth, but acting on what the truth reveals.

**Ex.** Someone might recommend the effectiveness of a tool, or a procedure, or the preferred route to drive. Trust is to respond to what has been said.

- The Israelites request that spies be sent to see if the land really is as they have been told. Deut. 1:22.

**Cns.** This project is not God's idea, but man's, and because it is based on human decision, it will end in disaster.

- Each tribe is represented by one of twelve men.

- Since each of the emissaries has been specially selected, their different experiences in the past will have convinced them of God's power to overcome any and all obstacles.

**Apl.** For a person to be able to serve the Lord effectively, he needs to have learned to trust Him in a variety of situations in life.

**Sug.** Discuss with the students the feelings of the spies. There would be a mixture of fear of the unknown and also enthusiasm as they embark on the adventure of exploring new lands.

- It required a measure of faith to begin such a journey.

- The rest of the Israelites share in the excitement as they watch the spies depart, following them with their eyes until they are seen no more.

**Cmt.** On conversion, the believer begins a journey of faith and throughout his life is expected to continue trusting in the Lord, who will show Himself faithful.

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SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: The same scene, 40 days later . Figures of the Israelites anxiously awaiting the return of the spies, who appear loaded with fruits of the land.

DEVELOPMENT:

Cns. Discuss with the students the things the Israelites would talk about during the absence of the spies. Would they be hopeful about the future? Would they wish to return to Egypt? Would they be optimistic or pessimistic?

- The spies finally arrive 40 days later, bringing samples of the fruit they found in the land.

Cns. God has been faithful with them and has brought them all back safely.

- The grapes, the pomegranates and the figs they bring with them show how fertile is the land of Canaan.

- These are a few of the benefits that await the people who, during the journey through the desert, have seen little or nothing of such things.

Cmt. In contrast to the arid desert where they are camped, the evidence of a fruitful land before them should have encouraged the Israelites to move forward.

Sug. The teacher might wonder out loud who would taste the fruit brought back. It was insufficient to be tasted by everybody. However, each tribe had a representative in the group who would describe the tastiness of the fruit.

Apl. Those who have experienced God’s blessing in salvation give witness to the satisfaction it brings. Ps 34:8 “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

- The report they bring reveals that the land is more productive than they expected.

- Proof of this is the size of the fruit they brought back..

- Nevertheless, the people listen with fear to the spies' report of the walled cities and the size of its inhabitants.

- Ten of them speak more of the problems than of the benefits.

- Moses receives their report, disturbed by the fear and lack of faith shown by the Israelites.

- The Promised Land shows every evidence of being fertile and prosperous.

- It was much better than what the Israelites had known in Egypt.

- Because they pay more attention to the size of the Canaanites than to the unlimited power of God, the 10 spies claim they looked like grasshoppers beside them.

- Joshua and Caleb remind the people that God has more power than any of the giants of Canaan, and they counsel them not to be rebellious.

- Their advice to trust and enter Canaan is not accepted.

- The Israelites imagine themselves fighting the giants alone.

- They do not take into account the power of God and His promise to be with them.

- Angry and unbelieving, they decide to stone Joshua and Caleb.

Apl. Lack of faith can lead a person to make serious mistakes.

