



CALEB

MEETING AIM

To discover that Caleb was brave and trusted in God, and that we can do so too.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Numbers 13; 14:5-9,24

BACKGROUND

The people have been travelling in the desert for a long time and God finally brings them to the land he has promised them. Moses sends spies into the land to see what it is like. Only two – Caleb and Joshua – see the opportunities. Caleb knows God is powerful and can be trusted. Younger children can often get frightened by new things, or by things that seem dangerous, difficult or different. Caleb's faith in God can illustrate how much we can trust in God.

CIRCLE TIME

5 MINS

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought with you. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Chat about the scary events in life and who helps us to be brave.

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

You will need: *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen (Walker Books) or the video of Michael Rosen performing the story (see [youthandchildrens.work/links](#)) and the means to show it. Read *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, performing the actions all together. If you don't have the book, but have the facilities to show a video, watch Michael Rosen perform the story. Join in with his actions.

Ask the children how they would have felt in each situation. Would they have been scared?

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: Bible

Explain that you're going to hear a story about God's people. Show the children the book of Numbers in the Bible. They had been travelling towards a new home

that God had promised to give them. And now they were almost there. The leader of God's people, Moses, sent twelve spies into the land to see what it was like. Some of them were scared by what they saw. But two – Caleb and Joshua – knew that God would help them and keep them safe. Say that you're going to pretend to be those spies! Tell this story-rhyme, encouraging the children to join in with some actions:

We're going into God's land to see what it is like,

There are twelve of us. We're not scared! *Creep around your space.*

Look, lots of hills! *Point into the distance.*

We can't go around them, we can't go under them.

We'll have to go over them!

Climb up, climb high. *Pretend to climb.*

Run down the other side! *Run around like you're running down a hill.*

We're going into God's land to see what it is like,

There are twelve of us. We're not scared! *Creep around your space.*

Look, lots of good things! *Point into the distance.*

We can't take a photo, we can't paint a picture.

We'll have to take some with us!

Chop, chop, chop, chop. *Pretend to chop the branch of a tree.*

Tie the grapes on a pole! *Mime picking up a large bunch of grapes and tying them on a pole. Pretend to carry the very heavy grapes.*

We're coming back from God's land, we've seen what it is like,

We are scared! *Ask some of the children to look scared. We're not scared! Ask two children to look strong and brave.*

Look! It's all too scary! *Your scared children should carry on looking scared.*

We can't go there!

God will look after us! *Your two brave children should mime telling the others this.*

We should go there!

CHATTING TOGETHER

10 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- Why do you think some of the spies were scared?
- Why do you think Caleb and Joshua weren't scared? What made them brave?
- What things in your life make you scared? Who makes you feel brave?
- What difference does it make to us to know that God is with us and helps us?
- What does this story tell you about God? And about us?

CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

You will need: dressing-up clothes

Show the children the dressing-up clothes and let them explore the Bible story through play. You might want to have some Old Testament style clothing and encourage the children to pretend to be Caleb and Joshua. How would they themselves have explored the land God had promised his people? What would make them brave?

Alternatively, have some modern-day dressing-up clothes and encourage the children to explore ideas around God being with them during scary times. Let the children guide the play and join in with the play as they wish.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: grapes, sliced in half

Remind the children that the spies brought back some grapes from the land God had promised them, to show everyone how amazing the land was. Share around the grape halves and invite children to take a half and eat it. As they eat it, ask them to think about situations in their own lives which they are scared by. Invite them to talk to God about how they feel. Then say a prayer thanking God that he is with you all the time, even during the scary times.

Sometimes it is hard for younger children to process and rationalise their fears, so be aware of this and work with parents and carers to help children.

ALEX TAYLOR

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For the rest of this month's sessions go to [youthandchildrens.work/together](#).



DEBORAH

MEETING AIM

To see how we can trust in God no matter how difficult things seem.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Judges 4

BACKGROUND

Deborah is a leader of the Israelites at a difficult time. They are pressured from all sides by enemies, and from within by their own waywardness. God helps his people triumph against the odds, and they trust him once more. Deborah promises a similar triumph here, but Barak seems afraid to go. As you explore this story, help the children see how God keeps his people safe.

CIRCLE TIME

5 MINS

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought with you. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Chat about who helps us when we have to do difficult things.

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

You will need: building blocks (wooden or plastic, such as Duplo); play people (such as Playmobil or Duplo)

Challenge the children to build a wall or house that will keep the play people safe. Chat about what helps them feel safe at home and explore how you can recreate that with your building blocks.

Place the people inside the house or behind the wall, and talk how the people might feel now that they are protected. Use this activity to chat about how God keeps you safe. Tell a story from your own life to help the children think about this.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: Bible; building blocks and play people from 'Intro activity'

Explain that you're going to hear a story about God's people. Show the children the book of Judges in the Bible. God's people are being threatened by enemies and they are scared. He provides

leaders for his people called 'judges'. Say that you're going to hear about one of those leaders – a woman called Deborah. Tell this story:

This is Deborah. *Place a play person in the middle of your circle.* She is a friend of God. She helps to lead God's people. God's people lived in dangerous times. There were lots of people who wanted to hurt them. *Place more people around Deborah, facing inwards as if threatening her.*

How would they stay safe? *Get the children to build a wall around Deborah.* The people of God couldn't build a wall to keep them safe. The place where they lived was too big. They didn't have enough time or bricks! *Ask the children to remove the wall.* How would they stay safe? *Get some ideas from the children.*

Deborah knew how to keep the people of God safe. They had to rely on God. God had told her that he would help. She called her friend Barak. *Place another play person next to Deborah.* She told him that he had to go and fight their enemies. God had promised that he would help his people. How do you think Barak felt? *Get some ideas from the children.*

Barak was scared. Even though God had promised to keep him safe, he wanted Deborah to go with him. Deborah said she would. However, Barak wasn't going to defeat the enemies – someone else would win the victory.

Off they went to fight the enemies. *Move Deborah and Barak around the circle of play people surrounding them.* And God helped them to win. He kept them safe! *Remove the 'enemy' people as you pass them. Then place Deborah and Barak back in the middle with their arms in the air (if possible).*

Deborah and Barak sang a song to God to thank him for keeping them safe. *Sing a song about thanking God. Or simply cheer and shout: "Thank you, God!"*

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- God kept Deborah, Barak and his people safe. How do you think they felt?

- Why do you think Barak didn't trust God to keep him safe?
- When do you sometimes feel scared? Who can you ask to help you?
- What does this story tell you about God? And about us?

Be sensitive when discussing feeling safe or in danger. Some children may be in difficult home or family situations. Make sure you follow your safeguarding procedure if you need to.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

You will need: art materials

Ask the children to create a picture about what they have discovered today. It could be a scene from the story, something that God has said to them or something that the story has made them think about.

Chat together about the story and how God keeps us safe. Often, when hands are busy then minds are freed up to think more deeply; this activity could be a valuable time to process thoughts and talk. Try to make the most of the opportunity this provides.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: play people

Give each child a play person and ask them to hold it in their hand. Say a brief prayer, thanking God for keeping Deborah and God's people safe, when they were being threatened by their enemies.

Ask the children to think of something that's scary in their lives. Ask God to keep the children safe at these times. Then encourage the children to close their hand around the play person and think about God protecting them and keeping them safe.

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HEZEKIAH

MEETING AIM

To discover that God can be trusted to keep us safe.

BIBLE PASSAGE

2 Kings 19

BACKGROUND

Hezekiah is king of Judah at the end of the 8th and start of the 7th Century BC. He witnessed the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel at the hands of the Assyrian Empire and had to defend his own kingdom from the Assyrians. King Sennacherib of Assyria invades Judah and taunts Hezekiah that no one will come to his aid, and that the Lord isn't able to save him from the might of Assyria. Hezekiah turns to God for protection.

CIRCLE TIME

5 MINS

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought with you. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week?

INTRO ACTIVITY

5 MINS

Play a game of 'stick in the mud'. Ask one or two leaders to be 'on'. They should try and tag the children. Once they have been caught, the children should stand with their arms outstretched. They can be freed by another child running under their arm.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: three envelopes; three sheets of paper; pen; brown material (hessian or sacks would be ideal, but any kind of brown dressing-up clothes would be suitable)

Before the session, write these three messages on paper:

1. "Isaiah, we're in real trouble. The Assyrians are being horrible! Ask God to help us! King Hezekiah"
2. "King Hezekiah, God will keep you safe. He will send the Assyrians away. Isaiah"

3. "God can't keep you safe. I am much more powerful! I will win! King Sennacherib"

Put the three notes into three numbered envelopes and seal them. Explain that Hezekiah is king of God's people. He has an enemy – a man called Sennacherib. Help the children say both Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Sennacherib wanted to get rid of Hezekiah and take over God's people. He invaded the land and boasted to Hezekiah. He told Hezekiah that God couldn't save him. He said he was the most powerful man in the world! Hezekiah was frightened and sad.

Explain to the children that when people felt sad, they sometimes put on dull clothing, called sackcloth. Dress the children in your sackcloth or dull brown dressing-up clothes. Talk about how this showed that they were sad – they weren't wearing bright happy clothes.

Say that there was a man in the kingdom called Isaiah. He was a special friend of God. Explain that Hezekiah sent Isaiah a message. Produce your first envelope, get one of the children to open it. Read the message out and ask the children what might happen next.

Produce the second envelope, and explain that Isaiah talked to God and this is what God said. Ask a child to open the envelope. Read the message out and ask the children how Hezekiah might have felt.

Explain that Sennacherib kept on being mean to Hezekiah, and to God. Sennacherib sent Hezekiah a message. Produce the third envelope and ask a child to open it. Read the message and ask who might be the more powerful: God or Sennacherib. Why do the children think that?

Finish by saying that God did keep Hezekiah safe. Sennacherib had to leave, because someone was trying to attack his home. Hezekiah and God's people were safe!

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- God kept Hezekiah and his people safe. How do you think they felt?

- Why do you think Sennacherib was mean about Hezekiah and God?
- When do you sometimes feel scared?
- What can you do about it? Who can you ask to help you?
- What does this story tell you about God? And about us?

Be sensitive when discussing feeling safe or in danger. Some children may be in home or family situations where they don't feel safe. Make sure you follow your safeguarding procedure if you need to.

CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

You will need: art materials

Ask the children to create a picture about what they have discovered today. It could be a scene from the story, something that God has said to them or something that the story has made them think about.

Chat together about the story and how God keeps us safe. Often, when hands are busy then minds are freed up to think more deeply; this activity could be a valuable time to process thoughts and talk. Try to make the most of the opportunity this provides.

PRAYER

10 MINS

You will need: crayons; paper; envelopes

Give out sheets of paper and crayons and encourage the children to think about a time when they want God to help them. Perhaps they were worried about something this week, or someone made them sad in the past few days. Help them to draw or write what they want to say to God about that situation. Put the paper in an envelope.

Even though some situations might seem trivial to us, they can seem important or insurmountable to young children. Try to help them express their feelings.

Keep the envelopes until the next time you meet. Then you can open them and see how God has answered your prayers.

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LYDIA

MEETING AIM

To discover how Lydia became a follower of Jesus and to think about doing the same.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 16:11-15,40

BACKGROUND

Paul has had a dream calling him to visit Macedonia, a region in northern Greece. This is his first trip to mainland Europe and Lydia is one of the first people he meets there. She is from Asia Minor, and is a follower of God, but readily accepts the message of Jesus. She and her family are baptised and then she invites them to stay with her. A church eventually grows in her house.

CIRCLE TIME

5 MINS

Gather the children together and share out any refreshments you have brought with you. Chat together about what has happened this week. What events did they enjoy? Did anything make them sad this week? Ask the group if they have met anyone amazing this week.

INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

You will need: shop-play equipment,

including pieces of cloth for a fabric shop

Show the children the shop-play equipment you have brought. Let the children lead the play and explore the equipment, but make sure you set up a fabric shop for the children to play with. Include some purple cloth in the samples you provide. Join in with the play if the children ask you to. Chat about which shops the children prefer and when they last went to the shops.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: child-friendly Bible

translation; your fabric stall from 'Intro activity'; a fancy piece of purple material (saree material would be ideal); large sheet of paper; marker pen

Explain that you're going to hear a story about God's people. Show the children the book of Acts in the Bible. Acts

comes after all the stories of Jesus – called the Gospels – and is the story of Jesus' friends going out into the world and telling everyone about him. Two of Jesus' friends were called Paul and Silas. God told them to go to a place called Philippi in Greece.

Say that they met a woman called Lydia. She sold beautiful and expensive purple cloth. Show the children your fancy purple material and take turns in dressing the children in the cloth. Explain that purple cloth was very expensive as the colours needed to make the cloth purple were rare and difficult to find. It was usually only worn by rich and powerful people. Let the children who are wearing the purple cloth parade up and down.

Say that Lydia already knew about God and spread out a large sheet of paper in front of the children. Ask them to tell you what they know about God. They might say things like "God is kind", "God loves us" or "God keeps us safe". Explain that Paul and Silas told Lydia all about Jesus. List some of the major events in Jesus' life that the children might know: birth, baptism, feeding the 5,000, meeting Zacchaeus, dying on the cross and coming alive again.

Read Acts 16:14-15 to the children. Lydia believed in Jesus, her family were baptised and she invited Paul and Silas to stay with her.

CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns in contributing:

- How would you describe Lydia?
- What do you know about God?
- Lydia listened to Paul and Silas and believed in Jesus. Do you believe in Jesus? Why?
- Why do you think Lydia invited Paul and Silas to stay with her?

CREATIVE RESPONSE

10 MINS

You will need: water; plastic bowls and jugs; dolls (of different ages if possible); towels; church leader to talk to the children

Before the session, fill the bowls with water. Show the children the water,

towels and dolls and remind them that when Lydia believed in Jesus, she and her whole family were baptised. Introduce your church leader volunteer to the children; ask them how they started to believe in Jesus and when they were baptised. Let the children ask your volunteer any questions they would like to.

Ask the church leader to explain baptism to the children, according to your church's tradition. Let them use a doll and water to demonstrate what happens. Ask them what it means with regards to faith, rather than just 'this is what happens'. They will need to think about how to explain this simply so that the children can start to understand.

Let the children have a go at baptising the dolls themselves, reminding them of what it means as they do so.

PRAYER

5 MINS

You will need: praise music and the means to play it

Play the music and enjoy dancing around. Every few seconds, shout something linked to the story today. For example, you might say: "Thank you God that you give us people to tell us about you!" or simply: "Hooray for Jesus!" Encourage the children to cheer after each thing you shout, before dancing again.

After a few moments of dancing and cheering, say this prayer:

"Thank you, Jesus, that we can believe in you like Lydia did. Thank you that you bring us people like [say the name of your visitor] to help us know more about you. Amen."

If any of the children want to know more about following Jesus, just as Lydia did, then use a booklet such as *The Biggest Surprise* (Scripture Union) to help them find out more about it.

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