**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# The promised land

### MEETING AIM

To discover how God faithfully keeps his promises.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Numbers 13-14, Joshua 3

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

Despite God’s proven track record for taking care of his people, God’s people again got cold feet and chose to see the problems that lay before them. Their faithlessness would cost them dear: 40 further years of wandering, and a generation never seeing their promised new home. Yet through it all, God remained faithful and did indeed give his people the promised land, just as he is faithful to provide for us today.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Ask the children about their week. Chat about a time when an adult made a promise to them – that they could go to the park or have an ice cream. Has anyone promised them something that then never happened? What did that feel like?

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** mirrors

Invite the children to experiment with pulling different faces to show different emotions, looking in a mirror as they do so, to see what those different expressions look like. Different emotions could include happy, sad, excited, nervous, scared or delighted.

After the first few examples, invite the children to think of their own ideas about which emotions to portray. You could pair the children together to show one another their different expressions, or involve your helpers in showing some different examples. As you explore different emotions with your faces, encourage the children to talk about different times when they have experienced these emotions.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** a large space to use to act out the story together; props as described below (optional)

Begin the story by reminding the children that God had promised to lead his people to the promised land. It was a place where they could be free and safe and enjoy their lives together. Moses had been chosen by God to lead his people to their new life. But things didn’t exactly go to plan…

Gather the children together in one part of the room. In another area, set a circle of chairs to mark the promised land, and between the starting and end point, lay a large piece of blue fabric to represent the river. Tell this story:

God’s people journeyed towards the land that he had promised for them. *Walk around together in this part of the room.* God gave them food to eat and rules to follow. *Mime appropriate actions.* He looked after them.

Eventually, Moses and God’s people came close to their new home. Moses chose twelve men to go ahead of them. They had to find out more about the place they were going to. Those men would have to look and see what the land was like, and who was living there.

*Choose two or three children to represent the twelve, and send them to look in the promised land. You may wish to place an adult with them to help them act out the next part.*

The group of twelve went to look in the promised land. They saw that it was just as good as God had promised. It was full of beautiful food and safe new homes. But ten of the men became scared. They were worried about how God would help them into the promised land. When they returned to Moses, they said that it would be difficult to take the land. *Bring the small group back to mime talking to the others.*

God was disappointed with the men. He was angry that they didn’t trust him to look after them. Because they stopped the people going into the promised land, God made his people wander around in the desert for another 40 years! But he still looked after them in the desert.

*Everyone should walk around in a circle for a while being unhappy.*

After 40 years, God’s people were ready to go into the land that he had promised to them. Not everyone lived long enough to see the promised land. Not everyone did as God had said. But God did exactly as he had promised his people. He gave them a new home in a beautiful land.

*Walk together across the ‘water’ and into the promised land. Cheer as you do so.*

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* What is your favourite part of this story?
* How do you think God’s people felt when they entered the promised land?
* Can you think of a time when you felt like this?
* Do you want to say anything to God?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** a selection of fruits, including grapes, pomegranates and figs

Invite the children to taste some of the different fruits. As you sample them, talk about what the children think of each of them, perhaps which they most or least like, whether they have ever tasted them before.

Encourage the children to enjoy the different flavours and as you share the fruit together, talk about the special things that God prepared for his people in the promised land. Talk too about the things that God has given us to enjoy. (Be aware of allergy issues.)

### PRAYER – 5 mins

Pray together as a group, inviting the children to join you by praying aloud. Begin the prayer by saying: “Thank you, God, for all the gifts that you give to us. Thank you, God, for…” and encourage the children to call out things they want to thank God for.

**BECKY MAY**

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