**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# The promised land

### MEETING AIM

To discover that we can trust God in the face of opposition.

### 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.

The Israelites have been travelling through the desert towards the land that God has promised them. However, when they get there and send in spies to discover more about the country and the people living there, the Israelites panic, turn against God and his leaders, and demand to go back to Egypt. With the benefit of hindsight, it’s easy to see how foolish they were, but we too can be hesitant or even resistant when following God’s plans. Help the children discover the trustworthiness of God through this exciting story.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Chat about the week just gone. Has anything scary happened? How did the children react?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** any resources needed for your chosen activity

Provide various puzzles and codes to crack. You can either come up with your own cipher that the children can use to send and decode messages, or get hold of puzzle books and work together to solve some of the puzzles there.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** masking tape; cut-outs of people more than 3m tall (draw large people shapes on lining paper and cut them out); grapes, figs and pomegranates; purple or green balloons joined together in a bunch; long garden cane; string; notebooks

Mark a line on the floor with masking tape. Stick up the giant people in one part of your space. In another place, arrange the fruit on a table, along with your bunch of balloons (a giant bunch of grapes!), cane and string. Give some of the children a notebook and then tell this story (instructions are in italics):

The people of God had been freed from Egypt and had been travelling through the desert for a long time. They had left the mountain where God had given them the Ten Commandments and were heading towards the land that God had promised them – their new home.

*Set off on a journey and then stop when you get to the masking-tape line.*

When they got to the borders of their new home, their leader, Moses, sent some spies into the land, to find out what it was like.

*Creep over the line and let the children ‘discover’ the giant people and the fruit. Encourage them to make a note of what they find. Cut open the pomegranates and figs and let them taste the fruit. Attach the giant bunch of grapes to the cane and then creep back towards the masking-tape line.*

The spies came back to where the rest of the people of God were waiting. They told everyone about the giants they had seen, and all the good food they had tasted. Some of the spies were nervous. They didn’t think they could conquer a land that was full of giants! But two of them, called Caleb and Joshua, were certain that God’s people would succeed.

But the people of God only thought about the giants and the danger. They said: “We were safe in Egypt! Let’s go back there!”

*Ask the children what they think might happen next. Would they agree with Caleb and Joshua? Or would they agree with the other spies and the people?*

God was angry with the people. He had given them a new land to live in and they didn’t trust him. He said that the people had to wander around the desert for 40 more years before they could enter the land he had promised them. But he promised Caleb and Joshua that he would reward them for trusting him.

And 40 years later, Joshua led the people of God into the Promised Land. The people finally trusted God and he gave them their new home!

### 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?
* What do you think about the spies and the people?
* Have you ever had to trust God for something?
* What does this story tell us about God? And about us?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** a volunteer to tell the children about a time when they had to trust God, even though it was a bit scary

Before the session, ask a volunteer to come and talk to the children about a time in their life when they had to trust God, even though it was scary and they would rather have done something different. Encourage them to rehearse what they’re going to say beforehand and to keep their language appropriate for the children in the group.

Encourage the children to ask questions and to explore how and why your volunteer trusted God, and what the result was.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

In a time of quiet, ask the children to think about something in their life that is scary, but that they need to do. Then encourage the children to ask God to help them to do that thing. Finally, ask the children to say thank you to God for being with Caleb and Joshua, and for being with them too.

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children’s Work*.